

Inside CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON

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BLACK SCORPION

ED GEIN

MEMENTO

HOUSE OF 1000
CORPSES

Volume 33 Number 1/2



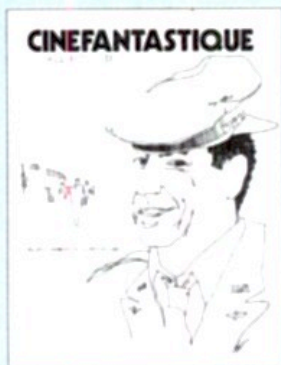
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"The Magazine with a Sense of Wonder"

APRIL 2001

"The problem with you Cinefantastique guys is that you take yourselves too seriously."

This was said to me during a set visit about ten years ago, by a writer for *That Other* genre film magazine. It wasn't offered out of malice; in fact, it was actually meant as a bit brotherly advice, a suggestion as to why things are at times a little strained between this publication and the publicists and producers upon whom we depend for our stories. I smiled and thanked him for his counsel, holding to myself the observation that anyone who invests travel miles and a weekend's worth of time just to watch a car blow up — as we were about to do — could hardly take him/herself too seriously.

He had a point, though. This magazine was born out of the belief that genre filmmaking is an art form worthy of serious consideration. We have tried, as much as possible, to apply that philosophy to everything we do. You'll notice it in this issue, where Anna L. Kaplan, an unabashed fan of the quirky, Sci Fi Channel series *FARSCAPE*, went above and beyond the call to file an examination of the show that boasts interviews with just about every sentient participant, Terrestrial and otherwise, involved with the project. And you'll find it in the rest of the issue, where, amongst others, Alan Jones probes the combined realities and fictions that come together to form *ED GEIN: THE WISCONSIN GHOUL*, and my brother, Mitch Persons, sits down with Ang Lee to explore the creation of his hit, *CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON*.

Yes, life would be easier if we backed off a bit, played nice with the publicity machines, not believe that the pages that follow matter to people who allow the worlds of science fiction, fantasy and horror filmmaking to fill them with the sense of wonder that has long been *Cinefantastique's* main reason for existence. But that wouldn't be the magazine that Fred Clarke founded some thirty-plus years ago. And it wouldn't be the magazine that I, and everyone involved, would be proud to have our names on.

Dan Persons



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ONE GENIUS TO ANOTHER

A.I.: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (Warner Bros.)

The late Stanley Kubrick delayed filming this story of a little robot boy until special effects technology came up to the demands of his tale. After the director's death, Steven Spielberg put the project on the fast track as tribute to the man who was not only one of the world's most respected filmmakers, but a close friend as well. How much of Kubrick's original conception will remain is anybody's guess: The credits list the director's name only in the context of his production company and Spielberg, in further tribute to his mentor, is keeping details of the film tightly under wraps.

June 29

THE MUMMY RETURNS (Universal)

May 11

Universal finally unwraps (sorry, sorry — we're sure you're going to be hearing that gag *A LOT*) its follow up to the surprise hit of 1999. The sequel keeps most of the cast intact, plus introduces a new nemesis: the Scorpion King, played by Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and already slated to go on to his own feature-length spin-off. SEE PAGE 24

SHREK (Dreamworks)

May 18

Dreamworks finally releases an animated project that doesn't look like it's playing catch-up with Disney (although it has to be noted that, in the realm of competing CG projects, many viewers preferred the sophisticated humor of *ANTZ* to the more child-oriented *A BUG'S LIFE*). A typically star-studded cast (Mike Meyers, Cameron Diaz, Eddie Murphy as an animal sidekick (*again?!!*)) brings life to this tale of a greedy ogre. This may be the birth of a Fractured Fairy Tales for the cyber generation. It's long overdue.

CATS AND DOGS (Warner Bros.)

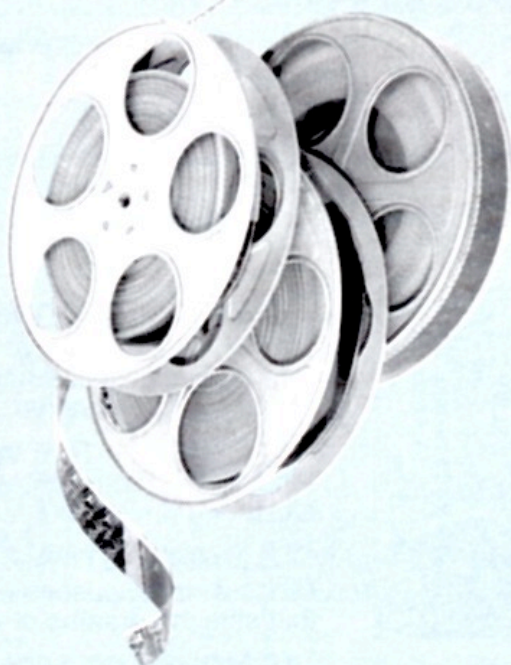
May 25

Little are we aware of it, but our loyal pets have a secret language that they use to communicate with each other. In this hidden world, they are intelligent, resourceful creatures who crack wise and pepper their conversation with pop-culture references and...What? *BABY GENIUSES?* Why, no, I never considered...Ohhhh. How much confidence does Warners have in this tale of a war between the titular pets over a vaccine that will prevent dog allergies? They're releasing it against *PEARL HARBOR*—is that a clue?

THE ANIMAL (Columbia)

June 8

A mysterious creature replaces Rob Schneider's body parts with animal organs, with the human then manifesting the behaviors of his donor brethren for the remainder of the film. Remember, this is the guy who broke big in *DEUCE BIGELOW: MALE GIGOLO*. You could probably work up a pretty good drinking game over the



CFQ PREVIEW

Upcoming cinefantastique at a glance, along with a word or two for the discriminating viewer.

compiled by Dan Persons

number of butt-sniffing and animal husbandry gags.

HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES (Universal)

June 8

Certainly the idea tickles: Rob Zombie tries to resurrect the spirit of Horror in his own image in this tale of a twisted family who have more fun with their houseguests than is legally allowed. The results could range anywhere from a hoot 'n' a half to a self-indulgent mess (and we're rooting for the former), but check out the details on page 18 and then admit it: You'd rather be standing on line for this funhouse ride than for *THE ANIMAL*.

TOMB RAIDER (Paramount)

June 15

Direct from every adolescent male's most fevered fantasy, the curvaceous, kick-ass adventurer Lara Croft comes to the screen in the toothsome form of actress Angelina Jolie. So what if there's never been a video game adaptation that's made good on the money invested? With Jolie in front of the camera (oh yeah, Jon Voight, Daniel Craig, and Iain Glen will co-star, but who'll be looking at *them?*) and *CON AIR*'s Simon West behind (expect those THX calibrations to get a *real* workout), this is already on track to be the adrenaline rush film of the summer.

DOCTOR DOOLITTLE 2 (Fox)

June 22

Rumor has it that Eddie Murphy agreed to return for the sequel only if duplicate sets were built so his performance could be digitally matted amongst those of his animal co-stars. Not quite the true, Dr. Doolittle attitude, but the original earned so much money that you couldn't blame Fox for not saying no. Expect the same mix of family-friendly heart and raunchy humor, plus another roster of recognizable voice actors, including Norm MacDonald returning as Lucky the Dog, plus Lisa Kudrow, Michael Rapaport, Molly Shannon, and, for those of you who still track the Firesign Theater, Phil Proctor.

THE CURSE OF THE JADE SCORPION (Dreamworks)

May or June

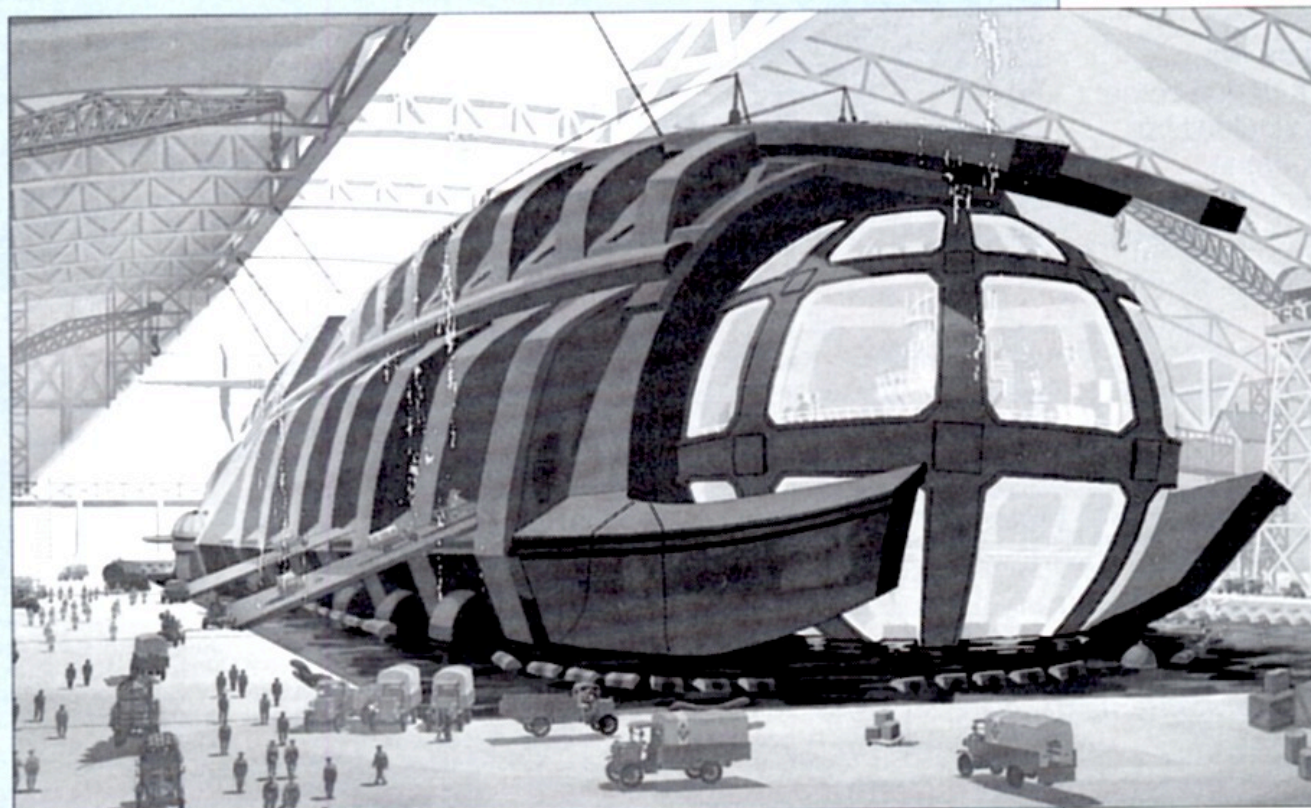
Woody Allen doesn't usually do genre, but when he does, it tends to have titles like *THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO*, or the above. Here's hoping.

DISNEY GOES DEEP

ATLANTIS: THE LOST EMPIRE (Disney)

June 15

After the visually stunning but narratively weak *DINOSAUR*, and the fun but slight *THE EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE*, this return to Verne-style adventure may put the Mouse House back on track. Disney Animation usually runs in cycles, and buzz about this effort is mixed, but a look at the designs (left) and what little footage has been released suggests that, if this guy isn't quite *TARZAN*, it's certainly blazing trails for a studio that needs a break from entrenched formula.



CFQ NEWS

CORMAN ROARS AGAIN

A New Jurassic Park Stirs the B-Master's Blood.

by Frank Barron

For years, Roger Corman was dubbed, "King of the B-Movies," a title he now smilingly admits bothered him at first. "Now, I just brush it off and say, 'Okay, I've heard it before.'"

Corman isn't as active as he was in the past years, but he has taken time off to produce several movies, plus a science-fiction television series called BLACK SCORPION, which airs on the Sci-Fi Channel (see page 6). He calls the show, "a female superhero show: vampy, sexy, and fun."

The prolific producer also is releasing KING DINOSAUR, a movie he's had in mind for some time.

"We did the film CARNOSAUR a few years ago, which came out just before JURASSIC PARK, and we did very well with it. So we did CARNOSAUR 2 AND 3. They were all successful. I had thought of CARNOSAUR 4, but realized it probably wouldn't make money, it would just break even. There's no sense in making a break-even movie, so I didn't do it."

Corman's "dinosaurs" were stored in a warehouse for several years, and later taken out for one more movie: KING DINOSAUR.

"I thought it was time to bring out the dinosaurs one more time. We shot the movie in Los Angeles and in the high desert outside the city."

Coincidentally, Corman's first picture as an independent producer, in 1954, was MONSTERS FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR, which he put out for a meager \$18,000.00. "And it made money," he laughed. (Perhaps not coincidentally, the following year competitor Bert I. Gordon released a film called KING DINOSAUR, although that effort's odd mix of spaceships and giant lizards will likely not be repeated in the newer version).

Almost 30 years after the release of MONSTERS FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR, Corman sold his New World Pictures company, and



Taking a bite out of the market: Roger Corman trumped the big boys by getting CARNOSAUR into theaters before JURASSIC PARK. Will history repeat with KING DINOSAUR?

the very next day formed Concorde-New Horizons (now New Concorde), where he produced the science-fiction feature SPACE RAIDERS, among others.

Over the years, he produced hundreds of films, including DRACULA RISING, STEPMONSTER, and the three CARNOSAUR films.

Depending on the success of BLACK SCORPION, "I'll probably pursue more television shows, although I'm not quite certain. It all depends on the Sci-Fi Channel, which is talking to us about a second season." (Bonnie Hammer of the Sci-Fi Channel confirmed that they are in talks with Corman.)

"The reaction to our series has been very good," Corman points out. "We knew we were not going for a network show, although I think our production value is comparable. It was geared for syndication, which gave us fewer outlets."

Further news:

Big boxoffice hit in France is BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF, a film about the legendary "Beast of Gevaudan" that critics have likened to a cross between DANGEROUS LIAISONS, SLEEPY HOLLOW, and ENTER THE DRAGON. Anticipation is that flick will ride CROUCHING TIGER's coattails into the U.S. market...Wes Craven is directing a documentary to be installed in the Clinton presidential library. No truth to the rumor that he will follow this up with a feature in which George W. Bush enters the dreams of educators and slashes public-school funding with voucher-shaped finger-blades...Frank Darabont is in discussion with Castle Rock to pick up helmage of the long-delayed FAHRENHEIT 451. The film will still be done under Mel Gibson's Icon label, although Gibson, despite popular rumor, was

Ancillary Marketing Coup of the Month

We're not really sure what *Star Trek: Borg Contact* does. The flier from Nova Productions plays it coy, noting the machine's "interactive moving heads," and that you will "battle against male or female Borg." There's nothing about what kind of battle this might be, though.

We're also not sure who exactly such a product would appeal to, since closer inspection suggests that this is an elaborate redressing of the old penny-arcade device that sent a safe but escalating electric current pulsing into a pair of metal handholds, the object of the "game" being to find out how much of a jolt one could endure before screaming out in agony or,



more preferably, just letting go of the damn thing.

Since we suspect that the machine's fun factor goes up in direct proportion to one's blood-alcohol level, look for *Borg Encounter* to wind up soon in your local tavern. And if, for some reason, you feel this device is out of sync with Gene Roddenberry's vision of a universe ennobled by mutual respect and cooperation (just imagine Guinan installing one of these in a corner of Ten Forward), remember that that guy also thought an ennobled universe had room for tons of beautiful babes with exposed midriffs. □

never set to star (he was originally supposed to direct)...Ang Lee is in talks to direct an INCREDIBLE HULK adaptation. □

BLACK SCORPION

Superheroes go back to camp in the latest from Corman's Concorde/New Horizons.

By Sue Feinberg & Judd Hollander

Born into every living thing is a dark side. It is an impulse, an urge, a nature if you will, to somehow go out of the acceptable bounds of society and make your own rules. Many beings can successfully suppress these tendencies all their lives. Others act them out harmlessly in fantasies, works of art or virtual reality games. Some let that dark side overwhelm them and become evil doers of one sort or another. And a very few, some would say a chosen few, take that dark side and channel it into something positive, something that makes a difference. The latest person who must face this challenge is Darcy Walker a.k.a. "The Black Scorpion," the title character of a new fantasy/action/adventure series with more than a bit of a cartoonish feel. A product of Roger Corman's Concorde-New Horizon's studios, the series is based on two BLACK SCORPION TV-Movies that originally aired on the Showtime cable network. The series premieres in March on Sci Fi Channel.

By day Walker is a police detective in the City of Angels (kind of a stand-in for Los Angeles); by night she's a vigilante crime fighter, battling super-powered evildoers while trying to stay one step ahead of the law as well as the man she loves. Raised by her father, a tough cop whom she called "Lieutenant" instead of Daddy," (and who was more of a superior officer to Darcy than a dad), Darcy was trained to be a cop almost from



WHERE IS THY STING?: Michelle Lintel slays just with her presence as the BLACK SCORPION.

the day she was born. When her father is shot down before her eyes and conventional law enforcement methods prove ineffective in discovering the reason behind his death, Walker dons the mask of the Black Scorpion, taking the name from a bedtime fairy tale her father used to tell her, to go places the law couldn't and to fight for justice without worrying about rights, rules or regulations.

Newcomer Michelle Lintel, who plays both Darcy and the Scorpion, feels that the redeeming factor in both characters is that they both know the difference between right and wrong. "As the Black Scorpion, she's a little dangerous, a little self-de-

structive. But she is still not the type of girl that will do anything unethical. She accidentally kills somebody once, and that was hard on her. And then as Darcy, she's just living up to [the memories of] her father." Craig J. Nevius, the supervising producer on the show, notes that it's the continual line Darcy is forced to walk that serves as the central theme to the series. "Darcy Walker does what she has to do, even if it's self-destructive. It's in her nature to do what is right, to bring justice where there isn't justice."

BLACK SCORPION supervising producer Nevius drew heavily on the classic Adam West BATMAN series when it came time to create the main character

and atmosphere for BLACK SCORPION. Nevius is also the head writer on the show and wrote the scripts for the two BLACK SCORPION TV-Movies that preceded the series. Interestingly, the new series cast West as recurring supervillain Breathtaker (see sidebar page 8). Other former superheroes appearing on the show include Lou Ferrigno (THE INCREDIBLE HULK) who appeared as the "Slave Master" in a BLACK SCORPION episode dealing with the evils of virtual reality, and Sam Jones, who starred in the film FLASH GORDON, and also once starred in an unsold TV pilot called THE SPIRIT, (a 1940's crime fighter), and is seen on BLACK SCORPION as the evil "Space Cadet," a kind of whacked-out astronaut (And although not a superhero, it's worth noting that Frank Gorshin, who played the arch criminal "The Riddler" on BATMAN, appears on BLACK SCORPION as the supervillain "Clockwise.")

But all is not dark and brooding in the City of Angels. The series also has humor, slambang action, futuristic sets and costumes, (the time period for the series takes place in "tomorrow") and more than a little cleavage on occasion. All these elements combine together to form a vehicle which those connected with the series see as containing the best elements of such shows as XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS, BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER, WONDER WOMAN, BATMAN, and others of that ilk.

BLACK SCORPION is probably closest to BATMAN most



Sidekicks galore: B.T. and Enya Flack provide moral support as Argyle and Tender Lovin' (only in America, kids).

of all. Specifically, it blends the darkness of the comic books and films with the lightheartedness of the 1960's TV series. Noted Corman (who serves as the series executive producer) "We've made a deliberate attempt to bring as much humor into this as we can. The combination of the action, the comic book fantastic element, combined with a lot of special effects, bring that element to

the fore." However this Black Scorpion is no caped and cowed crusader. Rather she is, as Corman pointed out, "a beautiful young woman in a very sexy costume." And that's a description that could apply to many of the villains on the series as well.

But sex often works best when paired with action and that is something The Black Scorpion has in great quantity. Series pro-

HAPPY CAMPERS: Roger Corman (left) with BLACK SCORPION effects designer Robert Hall. Exploring the lighter side of superheroes.



“She’s a little dangerous, a little self-destructive. But she’s not this type of girl who would do anything unethical.”

—Michelle Lintel on the *BLACK SCORPION*—

ducer Marta M. Mobley noted, "Something happens on the show literally every two minutes; be it a visual effect, a special effect, a car chase, a fight sequence, a special-effects makeup shot, or a digital effect. It's like *BAYWATCH* meets *BATMAN* meets *LOIS AND CLARK*. There's that much that goes on. On average, the show shoots close to ten pages of action every day. [A rule of thumb is that one page of script equals about one minute of screen time.] It's an intense experience. We have three [film] units going full [throttle] six days a week." Production designer Dave Blass agreed with that point, noting they're blowing up something nearly every single day—be it a car, a wall, a building, or whatever.

However, seeing a superhero defeat a common, everyday thief gets boring pretty quickly. During the course of her adventures, Darcy finds herself up against an impressive array of super villains with such colorful names as Inferno, Gangster Prankster, Aerobicide, Greenthumb and Stunner, just to name a few.

Revenge is a key theme to the series. True, there are a few super villains in the City of Angels who are striving for world domination, but a great many more are fallen heroes or law-abiding citizens who went mad after a tragic accident. (Somewhat like "Two-Face" in the *BATMAN* series.) Marine biologist Gail Waters is exposed to toxic waste and becomes "Hurricane;" seismologist Ursula Undershaft gets caught in an Earthquake and becomes "Aftershock;" Fireman Adam Burns gets hit with a blast of solar power and becomes "Inferno," starting fires instead of stopping them; and pro football player Danny Fields winds up paralyzed after refusing to throw a game and becomes "Grid Iron." All this lends a tragic, almost Shakespearean

touch, to their rampages.

These people are not driven by revenge so much as a warped sense of justice. For example, Hurricane threatens to destroy the City of Angels unless the mayor agrees to clean up the oceans and Aftershock threatens to reduce the city to rubble unless decent housing is built for the homeless.

While Darcy manages to defeat/destroy/kill these super powered evildoers (or at least come out on top from these battles) the *BLACK SCORPION* bad guys, like all good cartoon villains, don't stay defeated for long. (Co-star Scott Valentine, who plays Darcy's partner, Detective Steve Rafferty, a male "Lois Lane," said a common catch phrase on the set was "CLB—Cartoon Logic, Baby.") Not wanting to lose a good villain (especially one that might catch on with the audience) the show came up with a plausible way to bring them back, forcing Black Scorpion to face her foes again and again. According

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME OFF: Kevin West relaxes with his favorite publication. No, really.



to Nevius, that plot device pleased a lot of people. "More than a couple of actors playing the villains said on their last day of shooting, 'Do I have to die? I'd love to come back.' And fortunately, we have Doctor Phoenix, a recurring character, who runs a genetics lab and inadvertently creates some havoc on the city when he clones a couple of villains with the purpose of rehabilitating them. Of course it doesn't quite work. So you can't be sure who's really dead on this show."

Then there's the Scorpion costume. A low-cut, foam latex get-up painted black, with very high black boots, it leaves little to the imagination and is quite pleasing to the eye. Noted Lintel, "It's actually kind of thick, and in my opinion, the costume makes me look much bigger. [By that] I mean I look tougher and stronger than when I'm Darcy. Because as Darcy they put me in the skirt and the tops and everything. But when I put the costume on with the boots, I look like I can really hurt somebody."

Darcy isn't the only one with a fancy costume. All the super villains have their own special (and where the ladies are concerned—somewhat revealing) outfits. Mobley noted, "The costumes are amazing. They're very vibrant and they just totally describe the character. They're so detailed that [the actors] become the character, when they put them on." □

RED LOBSTER CALLED TO SAY THEY'RE SORRY: Kevin West in full-squid regalia.



BLACK SCORPION

ADAM WEST

The Former Batman Learns To Relax and Let His Resume Work for Him.

By Judd Hollander

It's been more than 30 years since the BATMAN television series went off the air, but Adam West, who played the Caped Crusader, still can't shake that connection, nor does he really want to. Recently, he climbed into a New York City taxi cab and heard a celebrity-taped message advising him to buckle his safety belt. What was interesting was that the person speaking was Eartha Kitt, one of two people (the other was Julie Newmar) who played the arch criminal "Catwoman" during the run of the show. West recalled, "The driver hadn't started the car and that thing played. And, [in his best Batman voice] I just said, 'Catwoman' and the driver just about jumped out of the car. [Laughing] He didn't know what was going on."

As much as West enjoyed doing the series, he does admit that during the entire run of the show, he had an itch he just couldn't scratch. "I wanted to play one of the villains." Unlike Batman, the square-jawed, stalwart, good guy of the piece, the villains were more flamboyant, sexier and could do just about anything and get away with it (at least until the last five minutes of the episode—which is probably one reason there were so many top-level stars wanting to appear as villains on the show.) So when West was offered the chance to portray the supervillain "Breathtaker" in the new television series, from Roger Corman's Concorde/New Horizons' studios, BLACK SCORPION, he jumped at the chance.



CRUSADER UNCOWLED: Adam West as Breathtaker; prosthetics by Robert Hall/Almost Human.

"When I saw the script, I thought, 'After all these years, here's my chance to play a bigger-than-life super villain. In a similar way that the others did with me.'"

Breathtaker has a special place in BLACK SCORPION lore because without him, Black Scorpion would not exist. Breathtaker is, in reality, Dr. Noah Goddard, a brilliant doctor who was critically wounded in a police shootout with a bullet passing through both his lungs. He survived, but is now unable to breathe on his own and is forced to wear a special suit that keeps him alive. (Kind of like the "Mr. Freeze" character on Batman, who can't live in any temperature higher than 50 degrees below zero.) During his long recuperation, such as it was, Goddard planned his revenge on the cop who accidentally shot him—one Lieutenant Walker. Years later, Goddard

arranges Walker's murder, with the Lieutenant being shot down right before his daughter Darcy's eyes. That sets in motion a series of events which leads Darcy to become the superhero/vigilante Black Scorpion. As a result of his injuries, Breathtaker speaks in a slow, ominously gasping manner, something West calls both very bizarre and very funny. Because of the character's history, it's personal for Black Scorpion whenever she and Breathtaker square off. And they square off an awful lot. West will appear in five episodes of the show's first season, with the hope of more to come if the series is renewed for a second go-round.

Something else that drew West to the role of Breathtaker was the fact that while the character is evil, he's also a tormented soul. After all, it wasn't Goddard's fault he was shot, an incident that unhinged his mind somewhat and led him to make several attempts to take over the City of Angels (Black Scorpion's stomping ground). But West noted of his character, that through it all, "there's a pathos and a sadness there. You almost root for him on occasion."

If West thought he had problems with the Batman cape, cowl, tights and costume, (which could get very uncomfortable after wearing for several hours straight), his outfit for Breathtaker was no walk in the park either. He had to spend several hours in the makeup chair and wear a heavy suit made of rubber and leather, often with tubes coming out of his nose. However, West isn't



PRAISE FOR CO-STARS: West enjoys his work with Michelle Lintel, calling the cast a group of "beautiful people."

complaining, noting the atmosphere on the *BLACK SCORPION* set was "absolutely professional," but at the same time, very "happy and free" and a place "where people can relax and experiment" while doing their work.

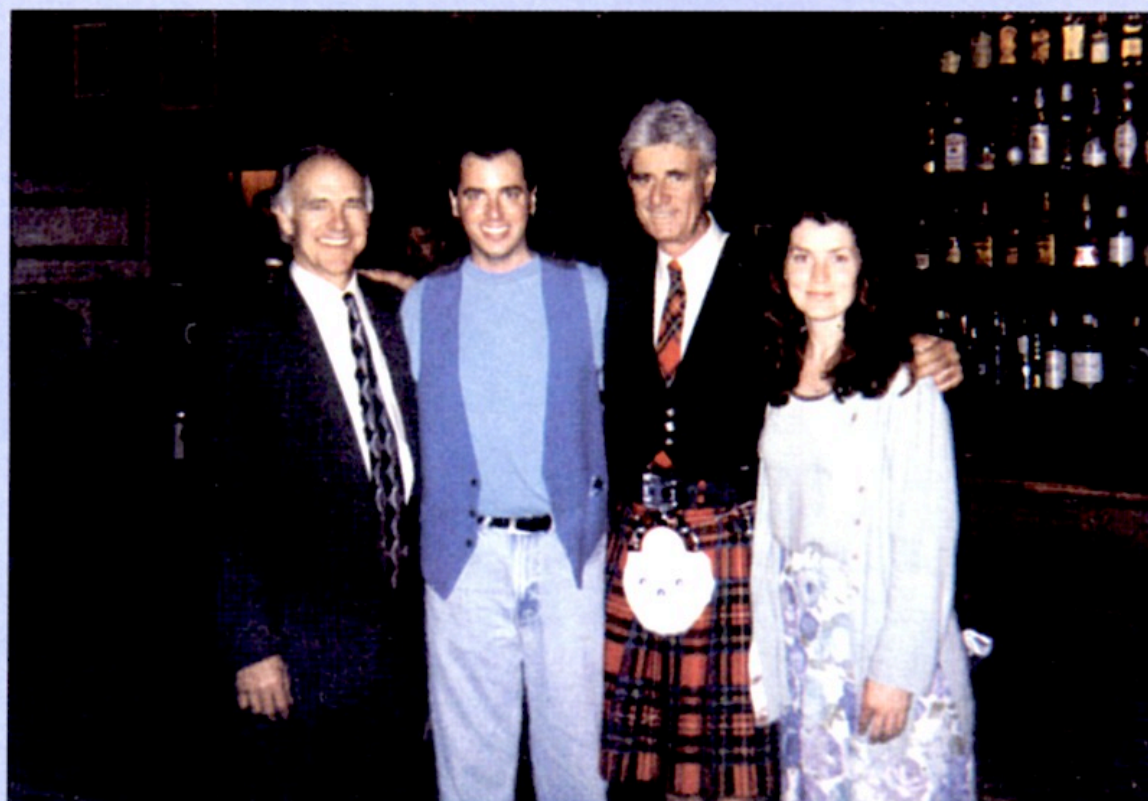
West's route to the City of Angels originally began in the state of Washington. He grew up for the most part on a ranch outside of Walla Walla, Washington. "I started out as a hard-dirt wheat farmer," following in the family footsteps, before going to college. Eventually he got involved in acting, albeit in a rather unusual way. "A leading man in a play died and I was asked to replace him. After that he 'was sort of bitten by the [acting bug].'"

Over the next few years, West's career took him across the country, with stints in New York, California, Europe and Hawaii. During this period, he did everything from writing and directing to hosting a morning show with a chimpanzee named "Peaches" ("who was actually a male, doing obscene things under my desk") and working as a milkman. Under contract to Warner Brothers Studios,

made numerous appearances in their various television shows of the period (circa 1959), and on his own as a regular on *THE DETECTIVES* in 1962, with actor Robert Taylor. Then it was off to Europe to do some "spaghetti westerns," until *BATMAN* came calling.

"I'd done a series of commercials for Nestles [Chocolate] in which I'd done a spoof on James Bond. Evidently ABC and [Twentieth Century] Fox had seen them and they thought 'maybe this is the guy who can play Batman.' So I went out there and I read the pilot script and I thought it was just mar-

Actors Robert Pine (Mayor Worth, left) and Lyman Ward (Judge Cheatem, second from right), caucus with producer Marta M. Mobley (right) and supervising producer/writer Craig Nevius.



"I rushed into a couple of bad pictures, because I was desperate to get away from *BATMAN*," said Adam West. "I realized it wasn't working so I started to kick back."

velous. It was fresh, different, unusual and very funny. I had a hunch when I first read it that, were it to be done [right], it would be a big [hit]. Originally, nobody knew what to make of it, but when ABC got some [very positive] audience reactions, they started beating the drums loudly, really promoting it and it became a huge success."

While *BATMAN* brought West international fame and visibility, he noted, "There were some difficult moments that went along with it. Being in a costume like that and buried in a cowl or a helmet for sometimes 14-15 hours a day, week after week, there's a creeping sense of losing your identity. And indeed that happened. As *BATMAN* came to a close, I was voted by motion picture exhibitors as, I think, Most Promising New Star of the Year (1967). [It was a] 'most likely to succeed' kind of thing. But that didn't happen. [Partly] because I was rushed into a couple of really bad pictures right after [*BATMAN*]. I didn't have to do them, but I did. And I think I did them because I was so desperate to get away from that character. [Eventually] I began to realize 'this isn't going to work.' So I just sort of kicked back, kind of

licked my wounds and tried to [take stock]." But through it all, West has no ill-feelings about the Cape Crusader. "The thing is, [with *BATMAN*], I was very lucky. Unlike a lot of actors, who are bitter or angry about their success, because they found it limiting, I'm able to do other things now. *BATMAN* became a classic and I feel that I'm just damned lucky to have been part of something like that."

Today, West is busier than ever, with numerous appearances in film and television shows. He has his own website at www.ksawest.com. West is not adverse to spoofing his *BATMAN* image from time to time. Along with Eartha Kitt and others, New Yorkers can hear West in taxi cabs warning passengers to buckle up. "There's always something new," he said. "I [see myself as] an explorer and just like to keep going and turning over every stone."

With *Breathtaker* and *BLACK SCORPION*, Adam West has come full-circle. From the ultimate good guy to the ultimate baddie. West has high hopes for *BLACK SCORPION* and agrees with others who have called the show a kind of combination of *BATMAN* and *BAYWATCH*. "I think [*BLACK SCORPION*] has got a great chance to become international in scope. Like *BAYWATCH*. That show is extremely popular in Germany, France and with other people overseas. [And] it's partly because of the beautiful people running around [in the show] and because it's cleverly made."

And since in *BLACK SCORPION*, villains have a nasty habit of coming back to life—or escaping jail—it's a good bet that *Breathtaker*—and Adam West—will be around to cause havoc in the City of Angels for some time to come. □



THE NEW AMERICAN GOTHIC: The wellspring for four decades of horror, the real story of Ed Gein is one of filial love gone horribly wrong.



THE

Going back to the

By Alan Jones

"There was a young man named Ed, who would not take a woman to bed, when he wanted to diddle, he cut out the middle, and hung the rest in a shed." —Anon 1957

In late November 1957, the redneck hamlet of Plainfield, Wisconsin hit the world's headlines with such a force that the aftershocks are still being felt today. For in that freezing month, Plainfield police apprehended Ed Gein, an oafish 51-year-old odd-job man, and named him as one of the grisliest mass murderers America ever spawned. Puzzled over the whereabouts of missing general store owner Bernice Worden, her deputy sheriff son, Frank, acted on a hunch and told the police to search Gein's ramshackle house set in 160 acres of ruined farmland where he lived alone and friendless after the deaths of his father George, mother Augusta and older brother Henry.

Even the police were unprepared for what they actually found in the rubble of Gein's grimy habitat. There nestling amongst the rat's nest of anatomy textbooks, embalming supplies and *True Crime* magazines were assorted human bones, lips dangling on strings, a cupful of noses, four flesh-upholstered armchairs, ten female heads hacked off at the eyebrows, a skin "vest" including breasts and Worden's headless and disemboweled nude body hung in the smokehouse. As Gein was arrested, and far more ghoulish findings were unearthed in the charnel house he called home, it transpired he had killed once before in 1955 when he tortured and mutilated promiscuous tavern owner Mary Hogan. He may even have been responsible for the death of his own brother. The subsequent investigation into his cannibalism, transvestism, grave-robbing, religious mania and other fiendish fantasies caused a media sensation ensuring the name of Ed Gein would live forever in the annals of America's most notorious murderers.

But the Ed Gein legend has also remained strong because of the movies. Living 39 miles down the road from Plainfield

ED GEIN WISCONSIN GHOUL

source for **PSYCHO & TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE.**

in Weyauwega, Wisconsin, author Robert Bloch was inspired by the neighboring events to write his novel *Psycho* that would eventually become a landmark in the fright genre thanks to the unerring hand of director Alfred Hitchcock in 1960. Bob Clark's *DE-RANGED* (1974), Tobe Hooper's *THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE* (1974) and Jonathan Demme's *THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS* (1991) also lifted certain details from Gein's dark life to powerful effect. Yet the real Ed Gein story has never been attempted before by the film industry, probably because murder was the least of his unspeakable crimes.

All that changed last November when Hamish McAlpine, owner of the British distribution company Metro Tartan, began production on a no-holds-barred screen biography of Ed Gein starring Steve Railsback (*LIFEFORCE*, *TURKEY SHOOT*, *THE STUNTMAN*) in the title role and *DIARY OF A MAD HOUSEWIFE* (1970)

Oscar nominee Carrie Snodgrass (*THE FURY*, *PALE RIDER*, *WILD THINGS*) as his domineering mother. Bill Cross, Brian Evers and Ryan Thomas Brockington also feature in the gory bio-pic which was shot in and around California when the idea of filming on the real Wisconsin locations was vetoed by the Wisconsin Film Commission, who told the production in no uncertain terms that they wouldn't be able to guarantee the crew's safety if they dared venture into actual Gein territory where emotions still run high. Made under the title of *IN THE LIGHT OF THE MOON*, and later changed to *THE ED GEIN STORY*, then *GEIN* and lastly *ED GEIN*, the low-budget independent was directed by Chuck Parello, the man director John McNaughton credits

“[The ED GEIN script] was edgy, disturbing and based on fact.” said Hamish McAlpine. “Even now I can picture the big studio executives turning pale.”



MOTHERLOVE: The twisted emotions that drive a twisted killer are explored in-depth in *ED GEIN*.

for guiding *HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER* to cult status and who was also responsible for helming its sequel, *HENRY 2: MASK OF SANITY*.

It was when McAlpine moved from London to Beverly Hills that the first seeds of *ED GEIN* were sown. He felt being in Hollywood would give him an advantage over other British distribution companies as more personal contact with the right movie business people would allow him access to prime titles for release back in Britain. Over the years Metro Tartan has forged a name for itself by releasing foreign art movies, like Julio Medem's *RED SQUIRREL*, the Belgian cult shocker *MAN BITES DOG* and the Danish Dogma production *THE IDIOTS*, but McAlpine wanted in-roads into

the American independent scene and was also toying with the idea of producing his own product. McAlpine said, "For a house-warming present I was given a bust of Ed Gein by special effects makeup man Tom Rainone, which I put on the mantelpiece of my living room. Shortly afterwards, I was buying some horror titles for British video release from producer Mark Boot and I invited him over to the house for dinner. He walked in, saw the bust of Gein, and said, 'Oh, how strange. I've got this great script about Ed Gein but I haven't got a clue what to do with it.' So he sent it over, I read it and immediately thought it was the consummate project to become my first production."

McAlpine felt Stephen Johnston's script, based on Gein's actual psychiatric reports, was perfect because it was never going to be the sort of material a major studio would consider making. He said, "It was edgy, disturbing and based on true-life fact. Even now I can picture the big studio executives turn-

ing pale as they read about all the miscellaneous body parts and Ed's warped transvestism! The only way to produce the film and do it proper justice was to make it as a no-excuses, low-budget independent so it was tailor-made to kick off my production arm. The problem is, by going the independent route, *ED GEIN* will probably be perceived as exploitation like *THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE*. I don't think that's an appropriate description because nothing in the script has been made up. We haven't shrunk from the gore or the violence, but I do prefer to call it an in-depth psychological profile more than a horror film. I think *HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER* would be *ED GEIN*'s nearest equivalent."

And it was that John McNaughton movie which indirectly led to McAlpine hiring Chuck Parelo to direct ED GEIN after his first choice, Tom Rainone, dropped out, although he does have a cameo in the movie. Parelo recalled, "After making HENRY 2: MASK OF SANITY, I was offered loads of other schlock horror sequels but I wasn't interested and decided to wait for something far more intriguing to come along. It's actually a funny story why Hamish approached me to direct. Hamish had met John McNaughton in Cannes and, as they started marketing HENRY 2 at the Festival, Hamish went up to him and said, 'Look, someone's trying to rip you off with a cheap cash-in.' John immediately told him he knew all about it, explained how I used to work for him, and added that he was impressed by the sequel. Coming from John, that's a good compliment, so Hamish went to a screening and really liked it, too. Within hours of reading the ED GEIN script, I

"It was clear that Ed was powerless to stop himself," said Chuck Parelo. "He was smart but he lacked common sense—that was vitally important to convey."



THE FACE OF INSANITY: Steve Railsback as Ed Gein. Left: Chuck Parelo on-set.

they deserved what they got. He wasn't sorry because they were both sinners. There was no sexual intent in his crimes. He just wanted to bring them home and have them around because they reminded him of his late mother. It was a way of resurrecting her in his mind. That's why he dug up so many bodies because he was experimenting with resurrection techniques."

He continued, "It was clear that Ed became powerless to stop himself and made feeble attempts to erase all his bad memories. But by that time his schizophrenia was really kicking in. Ed was smart but he lacked common sense. When he dug-up dead bodies of women, he often used to try and snap himself out of the evil trance he felt was possessing him. He couldn't stop himself though and that was vitally important to convey. He even tried to move house and swap with a neighbor just to get away but didn't have the energy to do so in the end."

Hamish McAlpine became more impressed with Parelo as

the project, co-produced by Mark Boot and Michael Muscal (Rainone's protégé), moved towards its November 20, 1999, start date and the Gein farmhouse was being dressed in Topanga Canyon. He said, "Chuck is primarily a writer and spent an enormous amount of time getting to know Ed. Although he's extensively rewritten the script he's letting Steve Johnston keep sole credit. I needed a director who had the intelligence to understand Ed but could also put his story and all its subtle shadings on screen. Chuck comes from a literary background as opposed to a film one and that was important in order to get to grips with the psychological depth of the story. Chuck was also keen to shoot it on a limited budget and in a small space of time to keep everyone's energy levels high."

Steve Railsback was attracted by that way of working too. The actor, whose last genre credit was DISTURBING BEHAVIOR, wanted to work 18 hours a day to push himself further than ever before into the dark recesses of Gein's mind. It's not the first time Railsback has played a notorious murderer. In 1976, he starred as Charles Manson in the highly acclaimed television movie HELTER SKELTER. Railsback pointed out, "Ed is the total opposite of Manson though. Ed was very much a passive individual and Manson couldn't have been more pro-active. Ed could always communicate well with children, but once he had to deal with adults, his bumbling immaturity took over and his social skills

working of the true facts," He explained. "It was good in that it got it right and didn't duck out of anything too controversial. But it needed more motivational aspects to be included. I added a lot more humor for Ed and made his characteristics more explicit. I also changed the ending, made it move quicker, and added a lot of fantasy scenarios because Ed had a great imagination that the first draft didn't encompass. Johnston was more interested in the visual aspects and how the two women got killed. I wanted to know more about Ed's creative process and how his grim fantasies fueled it. That meant I had to include his Nazi leanings because, in my perception, the whole reason why he covered lampshades in human skin was due to reading about concentration camps. There was the whole Christine Jorgensen episode too as Ed was captivated by her transsexual operation. He also read numerous *True Crime* pulp magazines and lurid scandal sheets. So do I. But, unlike Ed, I just find them compelling rather than the blueprint for my future actions."

Parelo immersed himself in books about Gein before starting on the movie. "I also perused the psychiatric reports which were invaluable because they revolved around him talking about his life, his relationship with his family and his reading. He had reasons for killing the two women—one was a dirty-talker and the other had coaxed her husband away from the dentist's daughter. Even when Ed finally confessed, he said

agreed to direct."

He added, "Does it bother me that I'm doing another movie about a famous serial killer [HENRY was based on the exploits of Henry Lee Lucas]? Not at all. I want to make movies that leave lasting impressions and so far they have been in the true crime genre as opposed to the horror one. But because nothing in the film is made up, it's turning out to be even more horrific than even I could imagine. It's of historical importance too and, while perhaps one day I might direct a movie that isn't filled with violence, ED GEIN is such a fascinating story, with a great cast—having Steve and Carrie starring isn't exactly slumming—that I felt I couldn't turn it down."

The first thing Parelo did when he came aboard the project was to rewrite Johnston's script. "The first draft had a great skeletal

ED GEIN

CARRIE SNODGRESS

The Oscar-nominated actress taps her dark side to find the human roots of evil.

By Alan Jones

To play Ed Gein's fanatically religious and domineering mother Augusta, the key to understanding Gein's mental instability and screwed up adolescence, director Chuck Parello chose one of his favorite actresses of all time—Carrie Snodgrass. Nominated for an Oscar as Best Actress in *DIARY OF A MAD HOUSEWIFE* (1970), Snodgrass appeared in such mainstream fare as *PALE RIDER* (1985), *MURPHY'S LAW* (1986), *BLUE SKY* (1994) and *WILD THINGS* (1998) and has built a loyal genre following thanks to her sterling work in *THE FURY* (1978), *THE ATTIC* (1979), *TRICK OR TREATS* (1982) and *WHITE MAN'S BURDEN* (1995).

Watching the 55-year-old actress working her magic on the Topanga Canyon location where the Gein farmhouse was built, the casual observer can only be struck by her dedication to her role and the seriousness with which she approaches her craft. But first things first. Although you spell her name Snodgrass, you do actually pronounce it Snodgrass in the expected way. Talking in her trailer between takes of a scene where Augusta and young Ed are physically abused by the drunken head of the family (George Gein played by Bill Cross), the feisty actress from Park Ridge, Illinois, explained, "It is an unusual name. When I first arrived in Hollywood they told me to change it, but I figured if audiences didn't remember Carrie, they would certainly remember the odd spelling of my surname. People tend to think it's a mistake and simply change it. On one film I made it cost the producers \$35,000 to amend the wrong spelling on the credits. I don't mind being called Snodgrass or Snodgrass in truth as my name, as peculiar as it is, is worth a million dollars to me."

Noted Snodgrass about ED GEIN, "Augusta is the reason why Ed turned out



OLD TIME RELIGION: Carrie Snodgrass embraces the spirit of fanatical faith in ED GEIN.

like he did. There's no question in my mind about that although, of course, she didn't tell him to go out and kill. It was Augusta's consistent religious ravings and railings about whores, harlots and sexual degradation that made Ed take off on his own sinister track. Some children are physically and mentally abused—you read about it in the papers daily—but they still attend Harvard University and become model citizens. Ed was the complete opposite. He heard everything Augusta told him and took it to the warped level he worked on making sick decisions based on her teachings. I don't think Augusta was mean-spirited about what she did and that's why I'm working diligently to give her soft moments and some lightness to completely take her away from the Mrs. Norman Bates perception. Augusta has to be sympathetic or else the mother-son dynamic wouldn't work."

As far as her co-star Steve Railsback is concerned, Snodgrass feels blessed to be working with him. She said, "We met years ago, worked together in *TRICK OR TREATS* and stayed in touch. He's devoted, committed, sincere and has a big heart."

Snodgrass always researches her parts and she avidly read everything she could about Augusta before starting on the picture. She continued, "The text books don't

tell us much about her actually. How she lived day-to-day or did she have any friends? I've had to make most of that up. One thing is clear though, she couldn't be around people who had differing thoughts and opinions from hers. That's what made her such a fervent educator and why she relentlessly filled Ed's mind with talk of the gospel, the fear of God and the sin of fornication. I do feel she wanted Ed to be a girl and was furious when he was born over his gender. It's a fine line we're walking in this picture, I'm fully aware of that, and I've made sure we don't overstep the mark concerning bad taste. One particular scene

has Augusta catching Ed masturbating in the bathroom. Originally, I was supposed to whip him mercilessly, but no one wants to see that. So I came up with whipping the bathtub with his belt instead and that made it all the more frightening because of the sound it made and the fact the audience isn't sure when it will come down on his body."

To ensure complete identification with her role, Snodgrass searched for personal props she could use to bring Augusta to further life. She explained, "The prayer book Augusta carries around and is never without is mine. The crucifix she wears around her neck comes from one of my friend's stash of authentic Twenties jewelry. You see, I think ED GEIN is more a drama documentary and not a horror exploitation shocker about some maniac gutting bodies. If this script had been pitched to me as a fantasy I would have avoided it. What fascinated me about the project was it was all true—apart from the poetic license taken in depicting Ed's dreams. People are still captivated by the dark side of his personality and I knew there was a great film to be made from his story if we told the absolute truth. Using my own personal props grounded me in the day-to-day reality of putting that across." □

lapsed into abject shyness. He remained a child throughout his whole life and I hope that comes across in the movie. Manson was a charismatic leader whose talent was for manipulation. It's weird that I've ended up playing the two most infamous killers in recent history, but when you get offered such amazing challenges all you can do is accept them gratefully."

It was in September, 1999, that Railsback was offered the Ed Gein part. He said, "The offer came out of the blue from Hamish and Chuck who had been rewriting the script to add more motivational aspects and humor to Ed's character. I hadn't seen HENRY 2 but I got to know Chuck really well and developed a good working relationship with him. He has a good visual eye and I really needed to rely on that. Once I had been assured that ED GEIN wasn't going to be schlock exploitation, I signed on immediately. Hamish went to great lengths to convince me that the point of making the movie was to be truthful to the real events and be a terrific case history. That has been adhered to and any misgivings I may have initially had have completely been erased."

Railsback confessed he wasn't too familiar with the Ed Gein story in the beginning. He remarked, "Like everyone else I knew Norman Bates in PSYCHO was based on him and other movies used certain aspects of his crimes. But I didn't know too much more so I read four books about his life. I have constantly referred back to them too as I want to portray Ed as realistically as possible. Frankly, the script is so good that my performance has leapt off the pages. It was as tight a script as I can ever remember reading and that's what you need on such a rigidly disciplined shoot as we have had."

He continued, "In my estimation, Ed was very normal and matter-of-fact in the way his thought process worked. He isn't a mass murderer as far as I'm concerned. He was a schizophrenic who lost the only thing that meant anything to him—his mother. Despite her cruel-to-be-kind air and manic religious zeal, he truly adored her in a typical love/hate way and did everything possible to bring her back into his life even if it meant murder. The two women he killed resembled Augusta and they were his maternal substitutes. Did he kill his brother? I believe so but who knows for what reason? Henry might have [resented] the divided attention of his mother and that's why he arranged the fire. No one will ever know for sure."

In what is one of the major challenges of

“She [Augusta Gein] couldn't be around people whose thoughts differed from her,” said actress Carrie Snodgress. “That's what made her so fervent.”



DOES THIS MAKE ME LOOK FAT? The full horror of Ed Gein would eventually serve as inspiration for everything from PSYCHO to SILENCE OF THE LAMBS.

his career, Railsback admits to having had to dig deep within himself to ensure he could supply Ed with all the sympathetic aspects necessary to make him more than just a cardboard cut-out killer. He said, "Every human being is made up of lots of colors and when I play any character I try and find as many shades as I can. Ed was sympathetic in many ways. The town treated him badly because he was an oddball. They didn't care for him and made sure he heard everything they said to deliberately hurt him. When his mother died, he became a recluse and that sort of loneliness is hard to imagine. He was totally alone and never went anywhere except to the local tavern. One guilty family let him come over to their house and watch television for a while but when he clearly couldn't interact with them on a conversational level he retreated even more inside himself. What must that have been like, to be totally friendless and alone? That's what I had to make sure came across."

But it's the relationship between Ed and his mother that Railsback found most interesting to play. He added, "He was taught from a very early age about the Bible. Every woman was either a whore or a harlot and that impacted on his adult life. I'm not making excuses for him, but if you say that sort of stuff to an impressionable child, it's bound to have an effect. Every time he felt an attraction to a woman, he had to pull back through guilt and the fear of eternal damnation. He didn't have any friends because the moment he tried to make any Au-

gusta would say, 'Oh no, not him/her. His parents are heathens, fornicators, this, that and the other.' It's no wonder he was mixed-up and emotionally on edge—all of which sublimated into murder."

Railsback has nothing but praise for Carrie Snodgress who he says helped him elevate his performance to untold heights. He remarked, "I love her and have known her for years. When I knew she was going to play Augusta, I couldn't have been happier. Her name takes the film beyond the exploitation tag that I know we will be fighting all the way through. What can I say? Carrie is momma. We work so well together and we are both wholeheartedly trying to understand our pivotal roles. Her commitment has been extraordinary and our scenes together are very powerful indeed."

Carrie Snodgress has only made twenty movies in her entire career and the theatrically-trained actress chooses all her film roles with extreme care. She said, "I knew the film was

going to be low-budget and that immediately made me go, 'Okay, the script had better be good then,' as I have sworn off such enterprises. Why bother involving oneself in such gruesome messes when I could just as easily stay at home and tend my garden? However, the ED GEIN script was really good and tremendously impressed me. I'm from the Midwest so I vaguely remembered hearing about this guy who skinned women. But other than that I knew virtually nothing about Ed's life. It was the script's rich language and the relationship between Ed and Augusta that really got to me. Although they originally thought of me for the Bernice Worden role (changed to the name Collette in case of possible legal action by Worden's relatives), once they offered me the part of Augusta I jumped at it."

Working with her old friend Steve Railsback was a joy according to Snodgress and her respect also grew for director Parello as filming progressed. She remarked, "Chuck trusts his actors and he cast the film brilliantly with that in mind. We had a table reading just prior to shooting and I realized then that every single performer was bringing something extraordinary to the script. He's not afraid to cross me either. During one scene, where I have to gut a pig, he told me I wasn't taking enough notice of my two sons watching with fascinated horror in the corner of the smokehouse. He was right as I was too involved in looking like butchering was something I was used to."

"I'm not looking for 'Well done, Carrie'

praise after every scene. I don't need that from Chuck. All he does is just nod and I know. But then every department is top-notch which belies the low-budget nature of the film. Veteran make-up man Daniel Streipeke [who aged James Dean for *GIANT*] has done wonders for my performance with his ageing techniques as I have to play Augusta between 20 and at 60 years old. The director of photography, [Croatian-born Vajna Cernjul] is amazing too. The look of the film is wonderful. ED GEIN has turned out to be a far better experience than I ever imagined it would be, even in my wildest dreams. We've all achieved something special and I know there's an audience out there, beyond the core genre one, who will appreciate that."

Any film dealing with Ed Gein has to be violent and unsavory. Parello knows that but explained, "I wanted to explore the motivations behind the violence because I don't want to turn the audience off with what Ed got up to or put him on a glorified pedestal. Most of the violence takes place off-screen. It deals with the psyche of the man, not splatter. You know something bad is going to happen but it's leavened with dark humor. If I've judged the atmosphere right even the most jaded viewer will stop laughing at a certain point and start praying. The mere fact we are telling Gein's story is a ratings worry. They saw me coming with *HENRY 2*, so God knows what they're expecting with this one! The scene where Ed dances around in the skin suit is the only shot I think where the censors might object, but we've filmed that in close-up as well as long shot for such insurance purposes."

That dance in the moonlight while wearing his grisly skin suit has been the toughest one for Railsback to come to grips with. He said, "The gory scenes have been hard for me to do but I do appreciate their necessity in the overall scheme of things. The skin suit sequence is absolutely repulsive to me, but it was of singular importance to Ed's state of mind. When he dances in the moonlight wearing the spoils of his crimes, he's free and completely himself. In many ways it's his apotheosis, his reason for being. I just dove head first into the scene and played it to the best of my ability."

He added, "I've had to trust Chuck completely throughout all this murderous mayhem. He has a good eye and that's what I've needed most because I can't look at myself outside a scene. I know both he and Hamish were worried that I'd try and justify Ed more than was factually acceptable because I have tried to shade his evil in subtle ways to stress his inherent humanity. It's important to me that we make Ed real and not just another straight-out ghoul. I wanted to



PROPS FOR THE NECROPHILIAC: Prosthetic heads wait for their turn as set dressing on ED GEIN.

know what made him tick and I do feel I've been able to communicate that. Sometimes he was sympathetic, sometimes he was deadly. But I wanted to make no judgement about that, or deal in absolute rights or wrongs, because Ed was what he was. I hope audiences will appreciate all the efforts we have made to tell his story in the most truthful and understandable way possible."

Fully aware of the past movies to exploit Gein's notoriety, Parello has gone to great lengths to ensure his case history is fresh, interesting and doesn't echo anything seen before. Parello said, "Whenever I felt the script touched the realm of *THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE*, I went 180 degrees in the opposite direction. My hope is that we convey new thoughts on the myth through the imaginative and hallucinatory passages that Ed made up. Horror fans are probably going to say, 'Oh that was lifted from *DERANGED*' or whatever, but it's my observation that good writing, good acting and telling the truth is what's going to make this a completely different experience from the other movies to have used Ed's exploits as

shock horror fodder. Just sticking to the real story is our unique approach. That's way more sobering and horrifying than anything we could make up. The story is basically about an extraordinary human being who was alone with his thoughts too often and his fantasies took over his life. I'm not looking for explanations but an understanding of a loner who murderously exaggerated events in his life."

Parello is surprised that his film is the first one to properly tell the true Ed Gein story. He said, "I want people to understand him more than anything else. His head was full of ideas but he was clueless. The way he killed his victims was just so stupid it leads me to believe that this myth about him being a serial killer is totally false. The body parts in the house were mostly cut from the already dead or dug up. But like in the Henry Lee Lucas case, the authorities conveniently blamed every unsolved murder from the past 30 years on him. The only thing they couldn't do, unlike today, was blame the media as Ed didn't own a television and never went to the movies. I'm wagering he only killed twice.

That he took his aggressions out on his victims in such a sadistic way makes you wonder what was going on in his mind. Yet that's part of the enigma, the fascination. The fact we're still interested all these years later proves Ed has staying power beyond the *PSYCHO* connection and we have gone to great pains to explore the reasons why he still remains such a mythical figure. I'm determined that ED GEIN will be one film you're always going to remember because of the overwhelming sense of dread even if you end up hating everything about it." □

MOMMA'S BOY NO MORE: Steve Railsback as a troubled soul gone seriously off the deep end.



BATTLESTAR GALACTICA THE SECOND COMING

Before Bryan Singer's Relaunch was Greenlighted, Richard Hatch's Pilot Trailer was Thrilling Fans.

By John Thonen

It can seem a forgone conclusion today, that a sci-fi genre film can't be done without a multi-million-dollar budget. Those who have toiled hard in the world of low-budget filmmaking know otherwise. Case in point: the group of film industry independents behind the promotional trailer *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA: THE SECOND COMING* (BG2). While only four minutes long, the trailer is a minute-to-minute match for any big budget sci-fi TV series episode, yet cost well under \$100,000.

"In many ways, this is the most satisfying thing I've done in my career," said veteran actor

RECLAIMING TERRITORY: Richard Hatch revives Captain Apollo for a *GALACTICA* sequel.



DREAMSHIP: Two decades after the fact, *GALACTICA* fans still long for the show's mix of science fiction action and Biblical themes.

Richard Hatch, star of the original 1978 *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA* ABC TV series, which lasted a mere 15 episodes. As co-writer, co-producer, co-director and star of BG2, Hatch has maxed his personal credit cards and mortgaged his home to finance the promotional presentation which he and his unpaid production team hope will bring the show back to TV, or perhaps even to theaters.

Despite many '70s and '80s film and TV appearances, Hatch is probably still best remembered as Captain Apollo from the *GALACTICA* series. The show told of the last survivors of a mighty outer space civilization whose world had been destroyed

by the robotic Cylons. The survivors now exist as a band of interstellar nomads, led by the Galactica, the last of a once powerful fleet of battlestars. This "ragtag fleet," as the series' opening narration called them, now wander the galaxy in search of a legendary home world. A planet called Earth.

Hatch recently explained that after spending nearly a decade out of the entertainment spotlight, working chiefly as a motivational speaker, he experienced a life-changing epiphany. "When the Sci fi Channel started running the old *GALACTICA* episodes, they brought me to New York to do some PR for it. I met a lot of people and started

to realize how many of them still cared about the show." Hatch, an infrequent sci-fi convention guest, began to regularly visit the fan enclaves. There he found a hard-core contingent of *GALACTICA* supporters, whose passion allowed him to see the show anew. "I became aware that there are certain archetypal stories that reach deep into our subconscious. Somehow, this story, this search for the 13th tribe—this exploration of a theoretical birth of mankind—was a premise so titillating that it had never really left the public's consciousness." Hatch also became curious how a series canceled for declining ratings had inspired such fan devotion. What he learned is that ratings were never the issue.

The show was always in the top 20, and its demographics were among the best on TV at the time. The cancellation was simple economics. The show's special visual and makeup effects, elaborate sets and large cast were simply prohibitively expensive. But Hatch also knew that times had changed and that a show like *GALACTICA* could now be produced at a reasonable cost. The technology was there. The audience was there. It was time to bring *GALACTICA* back.

Hatch approached Universal Studios, producers of the original series, but found only a labyrinth of impenetrable bu-

RICHARD HATCH ON
GALACTICA'S LONGEVITY

“There are certain stories that reach deep into our subconscious. This search for the thirteenth tribe never left the public's consciousness.”



BACK IN THE DAYS: Hatch with Lorne Green.

reaucracy. Having written a trio of *Galactica* novels over the years, Hatch said that he began to entertain the idea of using one of them as the basis for a promotional film to show the studio what he could do with the *Galactica* concept. “What I wanted was a short trailer with four to five scenes that would tie together into something linear that could encapsulate the

idea of the whole story.” However, in spite of his many years before the camera, Hatch had no real practical knowledge of the production end of filmmaking. To take his idea any further, he needed a team well-versed in the art of maximizing production value at minimal cost, yet also still hungry enough to tackle the daunting project for no money and only a

OUT OF MOTHBALLS: Familiar equipment and costumes return to the screen for *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA: THE SECOND COMING*.



faint promise of future compensation. Amazingly, just such a team was looking for him.

Independent producers Johnnie J. Young and David Sterling were shopping for an actor with sci-fi name recognition, to star in a pair of ambitious, but low-budget, genre films they planned to shoot back-to-back. A sci-fi convention regular, Sterling had heard that Richard Hatch had a reputation as likable and surprisingly ego-free. When contacted, the actor agreed to tackle roles in both the action-sci-fi oriented, *IRON THUNDER*, and the horror film, *UNSEEN*. Slated to direct both films was frequent Young collaborator, Jay Woelfel, and his regular cinematographer, Scott Spears. While none of them were aware of it yet, the nucleus of the BG2 team was now in place.

Richard Hatch noted that he has commitments for the money needed to produce a *GALACTICA* revival film. All he needs is Universal's permission. Yet, that financially troubled production entity maintains a silence on the issue that is quite befitting its former moniker as the “Black Tower.” Meanwhile, series creator Glen Larson, who for a time was allied with another *GALACTICA* revival project, is awaiting a Writer's Guild ruling on what, if any, rights he may still have to the show's name and concept. All Hatch and his compatriots can do is wait, but there is already a sense of satisfaction amongst them that is perhaps best expressed by Richard Hatch himself. “To watch an audience really get excited about something that you are a part of is the most extraordinary experience in the world. It's not what the business is usually about. But it's what everyone in the business really wants, and rarely gets. When you listen to those conventions crowds cheer. We know that we did it.”

Hatch remains interested in spearheading a *BATTLESTAR* revival, but has been putting

most of his energies into another sci-fi project called *THE MAGELLAN WARS*. While many of the participants in Hatch's triumphant BG2 trailer project are involved in this one as well, little else is known about the concept.

The Sci Fi Channel has resumed airing repeats of the original series and has publicly expressed interest in producing a new series. Executive V.P. and General Manager, Bonnie Hammer, described the production of new *BATTLESTAR* episodes as, “definitely something we are looking into” during a chat on the station's website. Shortly after Hammer's statement, a poll was posted on the site to gauge interest in such a revival. The poll specifically asked if those in favor of a new series would also want to see Richard Hatch's involvement in it. The poll garnered the most votes of any in the website's history, and the results were overwhelmingly in Hatch's favor. Series creator, Glen Larson's name was conspicuously absent in the poll. □

WELCOME BACK, OLD FRIEND: The Cylons made a grand entrance in Richard Hatch's sequel pilot.



HOUSE OF 10

A Zombie movie? Rock icon-turned-

By Denise Dumars

Filming on a cold, dark night in early June in a remote area near Valencia, California, on the famous Valuzet Movie Ranch where numerous films, including *FRIDAY THE 13TH PART III* have been filmed, rocker-turned-filmmaker Rob Zombie's *HOUSE OF 1,000 CORPSES* promises to be an old-fashioned horror movie. As bats fly overhead in the light of a gibbous moon ("Are those really bats?" asks a city-kid technician) stars huddle before portable heaters: Karen Black in a corset, black fishnet stockings and a long blonde wig; Sheri Moon, Rob's luminous significant other, wears a Bob Mackie gown originally designed for Cher and a wig that matches Black's. They play Mother and Baby, just two of the unusual characters in the film. They wait for their call as an eerie scene is unfolding in an old barn.

While the set in the barn is being readied, Rob Zombie sits outside in the dark talking about his film. Zombie looks more soulful than threatening without his spooky makeup; his trademark dreadlocks are dark brown, his face is thin and he has huge hazel eyes. His hands are expressive in the moonlight. The film is his baby; the five-time Grammy nominee has written the script and is directing it. Though it's his first experience with film directing, it's not his first directing gig; he directs his own music videos. And he's written other scripts, including an as-yet-unproduced sequel to *THE CROW*. Universal opens Zombie's directing debut nationwide in January.

HOUSE OF 1,000 CORPSES is not supernatural horror, he said. "It's more like real-life horror. It's more scary in the



Welcome to Zombie's House of Horrors. Though he won't say what it is, he's positively verbose about what it isn't—not one of those self-reflexive teen horrors that wink at you. Below: Zombie's ode to *FREAKS*, makeup by Wayne Toth.



DO CORPSES

Rob Zombie keeps all the horror hush-hush.

way, say, *DELIVERANCE* is scary," he explained. But clearly something very strange is going to take place in that barn; it's decorated with posters from old-time carnival freak shows, and dummies wearing scary masks sit in the "audience." The shooting schedule has been brutal: they've been filming an average of five pages a night in order to complete this film in just six weeks.

Why the retro look and feel? Well, modern horror films just don't work for Zombie. He hates teen popcorn tongue-in-cheek thrillers such as *SCREAM*, and so this film will harken back to what he feels are the two great ages of horror films: the 1930s and the 1970s, a blend of genuine spookiness with an overlay of exploitation.

"For me, nothing works on any level in modern horror films," he said. "To me, they're as scary as a Nancy Drew/Hardy Boys mystery. There are no real monsters, there's no real horror, they just seem like bad TV shows blown up for the big screen. They're teen thrillers. There's no real danger because you know they'd never kill off any of their big stars. The new generation loves them, but I can't stand them."

So then, is *HOUSE OF 1,000 CORPSES* not a teen date film? "In a way, I think it is," he said. "Maybe in the same way *THE EXORCIST* was. But the characters in this film are older, they're not teenagers. It's all so tired to see a bunch of 30 year olds playing high school students," he laughed. "I also wanted a bunch of real-looking people, average people, so that the horror seemed like more of a real threat to real people, instead of supermodels."

Zombie won't admit to much about the film; it's a hush-hush affair that had actors signing

"[HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES] is more like real-life horror," said writer/director Rob Zombie. "It's scary in the way, say DELIVERANCE is scary."



Zombie directing. The rock star turned filmmaker opens his low-budget horror nationwide in January through Universal, which backed his distinctive vision.

confidentiality agreements and journalists being told "no photographs" and being shooed off the set during takes. It's even hard to get Zombie to say much about his influences: Herschell Gordon Lewis, for example? "I like his films, but he's not much of an influence. Well, maybe *2000 MANIACS*, a little," he admitted.

Zombie's clear about his preferences, however. "Thirties' horror mixed with '70s exploitation drive-in horror. Definitely the classic Universal horror films. That *OLD DARK HOUSE* feel mixed with '70s sleazy drive-in, *TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE* style."

Zombie drew on *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI* for his video of the song "Living

Dead Girl," so his film influences are already familiar to his fans.

The movie is set in the '70s. "I guess that's the time period I remember the best from horror movies, when movies to me seemed the coolest, to get that kind of drive-in sleaziness we'd have to set it in the '70s, not in the year 2000. What we're doing is kind of timeless. So if you watch it, it won't scream '70s, but it is," he said.

HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES is not set in any readily-identifiable locale. "We kept that vague. It looks like it could be many places...could be Montana, could be Texas, could be Mississippi. We didn't really specify."

The film will not be an ef-

fects extravaganza. "We don't have a lot and the ones we do are real old-school," said Zombie. "We don't use a lot because I think it takes you out of the movie too much. This is a little bit of *FREAKS*, a little bit of everything. When you see really rough movies like *CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST* the effects are so raw that they look real. You think, 'oh my God, did they really kill that woman?' But when you see anything nowadays it's not even scary."

From the beginning of his career, Zombie wanted to make movies. "That's what I've always wanted to do. But the music started happening and I went with that and I knew there would be a way to swing it back to this. I knew that when the time was right, we'd get there."

Are there people in the film we can identify with as protagonists and be scared along with them? "I think so. I think that the bad people are interesting enough you'll also like them. It's like everyone was supposed to like Luke Skywalker, but liked Darth Vader anyway. It's that kind of situation."

It's clear that Zombie likes the villains. "They have to be cool. Without that, you have nothing. We have about five of them. I don't know which one will be *the* one that everyone will be talking about, but we have several. It kind of works as a group."

The element of surprise is very important to Zombie. "I tried to make it so that everything would take people by surprise. Hopefully it's not predictable. I tried to make it so whoever you thought for sure would live dies and whoever you thought for sure would die, lives. Every time something happens, it's the exact opposite. Most movies you can telegraph in the first five minutes. I'm try-

ing to make it as unpredictable as possible."

Zombie wants his film to shock from the very first scene. "One thing I hate is the first 40 minutes of nothing. So I tried to start with a bang. It's gonna be a bang that's going to confuse people. But it'll all tie-in at the end. The beginning is one of my favorite parts. Before the credits even roll, people will be scratching their heads wondering what it is they're trying to watch here."

Zombie is proud of his villains. "The bad people are really the main characters. No matter how psycho and evil they are, people will come away saying, 'Wow, they're cool. I don't care how evil they are.'"

Zombie's influences are surprisingly wide-ranging. "John Ford, James Whale, all those classic directors. People like Tim Burton. You hear they're making a remake of PLANET OF THE APES and you think, oh that's so lame. Then you hear that it's Tim Burton who's doing it, and you say, 'Oh, I'll check that out.' You know that he'll do something different."

The film has a \$5-10 million budget. "Even though we have a low budget, I never look at it like a B-movie because that's insulting to everybody. I wanted A-actors and wanted to make an A-movie. That was important down to the smallest role. Old

Horror icon Karen Black stars as Mother. Noted Zombie, "I wanted A-actors. I wanted to make an A-movie."



"There are no monsters, no real horror. Modern horror films seem like bad TV shows blown up for the big screen," said Zombie. "Teen thrillers, I can't stand them."



Zombie's "real-life horror," Mother's murderous brood sit down for a family dinner, an homage to Tobe Hooper's seminal TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE.

movies just took for granted that people could act. In films like THE OLD DARK HOUSE everyone was great."

The MPAA is the one thing Zombie's not looking forward to dealing with. "We have to get an R-rating. NC-17 is death for any movie, of course, and we already have a rough cut that's NC-17. I'm worried about getting some weird thing like, 'the tone of the movie is too dark.' How do you change the tone? We don't have the time or money to play the game of shooting extra-gory scenes just so they can be sacrificed to the ratings board, which is what everyone does. Wayne Toth, who did our makeup effects, showed me shots of all these gory beat-up bodies he did for GOODFELLAS, that were done purposely to be cut so that they could keep other stuff in the film. I don't have time for that."

Toth is not as worried about the censors as Zombie is. "It's just strange. Most of the movie is about weirdness, not about bloodshed or a lot of gore. Everyone would just stand around on set and look at each other and say, 'this is so weird!'"

"It's disturbing because it's

realistic. The situations and characters are believable enough so that it makes it that much more scary.

"It's almost kind of a circus sideshow atmosphere," he explained. "Greg Gibbs did the production design, such as the design of the barn where the show takes place in the film. He had also worked on some of Rob's videos."

The studio let Zombie bring in a lot of the people on the film such as Toth and others he'd worked with before. "They kept an eye on things from what I can tell, but if you're gonna hire some one like Rob Zombie to do a movie, you might as well let him do his thing and let it be weird. He had that experience on THE CROW III where he was hired to write and direct and they kept saying, 'That's too weird. Can't you make it a little more normal, make it like the other CROW movies?' Why even hire Rob Zombie if he's not really what you want? So he had a fair amount of freedom on this film, especially when they saw some of the stuff and knew what he was doing."

Other familiar faces include '60s favorite Michael J. Pollard,

known for his TV work and his role in the film BONNIE AND CLYDE; Matthew McGrory, a veteran of Dave Parker's first film, THE DEAD HATE THE LIVING, plays Tiny, another of Mother's brood; Chris Hardwick, from MTV, plays one of the "good people" in the film; Jerry Goldsmith, one of four young people out looking for oddities that find more than they bargained for. "I'm a friend of the director and I like to hang around sets and get in the way," he joked. "I hosted a show for MTV. White Zombie was one of the first bands I interviewed. Then Rob and I just started showing up at the same places and found out we had a lot in common."

"In the film, I'm an obnoxious character," he said. So, then, is he the one who gets killed-off right away, as wisecracs often do in horror movies? Hardwick was mum.

Sheri Moon, in her big-screen debut, plays Baby. "She's from a nice family of freaks," she laughed. Mother's family members include Tiny, Dr. Satan, Otis, Rufus, Grandpa. "It's Halloween Eve and it's a big show that we do every year," she said, describing the Firefly family presentation that's about to go on in the barn. "Grandpa tells jokes, Tiny does a little tapdance, Baby does a different song and dance every year."

Sheri would definitely like to play this role again, since she doesn't get killed off in the film. "No one in the family does," she said, letting a plot point slip. "We watch each other's backs," she explained. "This is my first film. I've been in many of Rob's videos: *Living Dead Girl*, *More Human Than Human*, and in the live shows. I like the horror scene. It's fun. This is the first time I have to speak on camera, though, so it's a little nerve-wracking."

"She's a nymphomaniac," Karen Black noted of Baby. "Just like her mother," slipping into Mother's Okie accent and speaking in character. "So here we are in this house, with this wonderful family—I have a son who's almost eight feet tall, and it's just too bad we lost Earl, my husband. And I have a double-headed fetus. Anything that

ROB ZOMBIE

A look at the rock star whose dream is to become a filmmaker.

By Denise Dumars

Who is Rob Zombie? A big-time rock star, feared by Fundamentalists who don't understand that his devil-rock music isn't seriously satanic? A horror aficionado who names his songs after obscure science fiction and horror films? A writer and director who calls his music career "a happy accident?" Or someone else entirely?

Let's first take a look at his reading list. "I like Clive Barker. I've read all his books...I liked the first HELLRAISER film. But usually when I read I read nonfiction. Right now I'm reading a new biography of Groucho Marx. Mostly things like that."

Groucho Marx? But Zombie's whole oeuvre is in the horror scene. He does it with movies, music, art, theme park attractions...there's even a horror action figure from Todd MacFarlane. "It's great. I'm now fully poseable," he said of the doll. "I can't really move like that," he laughed.

What is it about horror that captivates him so much? "I guess I've always liked it ever since I was a little kid. I don't know why; it just was there, and some kids like baseball, and I liked horror movies."

Sheri Kitty Moon graces Zombie's CD for Geffen, with a cover utilizing his own artwork and designs.



He revealed a little bit about himself. "I guess there's some truth to the story of being the fucked-up kid who everybody hates, so you go to a horror movie and identify with the monster. You go, 'Well, if they're fucking with Godzilla, it must be OK.'"

What's his favorite horror movie? "It fluctuates. Sometimes it's FRANKENSTEIN, THE OLD DARK HOUSE, NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD or TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE. Sometimes it's KING KONG."

He shrugged. "I don't really have an answer for the 'why horror' question. I just remember being so young, and walking to the local library because they were showing KING KONG. I grew up in Massachusetts. Where I lived there were a lot of old graveyards, very cool. Lots of atmosphere."

When on tour Zombie takes full advantage of the local macabre sights. "When I was in Prague we went to see these churches made of bones. They have lamps and chandeliers made of bones. It was wild."

Zombie continues to identify with the misunderstood monsters of the world. "There was a time when everything that was great about horror movies was the bad people. Villains have to be the coolest. I don't know why. It's kinda like the appeal of true crime; no matter how bad you feel for the victims, the Manson family are still the more interesting bunch and the ones that are focused upon."

Zombie adds, for accuracy's sake, "I like all movies. It's horror that gets focused on the most. I love classic movies. W. C. Fields, the Marx Brothers, I love those old movies. It's just that nobody asks me about them. If I could get away with it, I'd make films in black and white. But they're a tough sell. I purposely wanted to set HOUSE in the '70s so that there was no chance someone could jam modern music into it. That way there'd be no cheap tie-ins. I hate films like SCREAM," he said. "Nothing but Glamour Shots. Makes me nauseous," he laughed.

So, who is the real Rob Zombie? The guy identifies with the monster, or the guy



Zombie on tour, feared by fundamentalists who perceive his devil-rock music as seriously satanic.

who loves the Marx Brothers?

Ask Sheri Moon, his longtime girlfriend who plays Baby in the film. "He gets up early in the morning and watches movies before I even get up. He stays up late and watches movies. Sometimes he stays up all night watching John Ford westerns," she said.

Rob Zombie was born Robert Cummings in Haverhill, Massachusetts. He formed the rock band White Zombie, named for the 1932 voodoo movie starring Bela Lugosi, with Sean Yseult. Their album *La Sexorcisto: Devil Music Vol. 1*, drew attacks from the religious right who didn't understand or appreciate the album's horror-fandom slant. Their next album, *Astro-Creep 2000*, won awards and went to double platinum in sales. He went solo as Rob Zombie in 1998 and Yseult formed her own band, Famous Monsters

His next album, *Hellbilly Deluxe*, was wildly popular, and he performed as part of OZZfest '99. "Last year, I toured with Ozzie Osbourne, and this year I thought I'd do something different," he said of his movie directing move. In 1999, he also toured with Korn on their "Family Values" concert tour. Universal tapped him to do a theme-park attraction for Halloween; Chris Carter teamed him with Alice Cooper for a song on the first X-FILES album; and Howard Stern wanted to duet with him in a song for his film PRIVATE PARTS. You've heard Rob Zombie songs used in MILLENNIUM and the X-FILES and in the TV movie WITCHBLADE.

In addition, Zombie now runs his own record label, Zombie-a-Go-Go, which plans to release digitally remastered music from classic horror films.

Sounds like the left-out little kid who identified with King Kong and Godzilla is about to do some stompin' of his own. □

came out of me, I keep. And this is my baby genius," she said of Otis, played by Bill Moseley. "He's a genius sculptor. He can sculpt anybody into anything," she said and grinned. "He can take your head and your limbs and make something for the gallery."

Moseley interjected, "Yeah, Otis is an artist. He's had kind of an artist's block lately, but then these kids come along and that gets things flowing again," he laughed.

"Sheri and I dress in these long, floating white gowns with these long blonde wigs and we just have a ball," Black said. She admires her director. "Isn't he cute?" she said. "I just want to hug him."

Sid Haig, probably best known for his performance as the atavistic brother in *SPIDERBABY*, plays creepy Captain Spaulding, named after a Groucho Marx character. "Kiss my ass is Capt. Spaulding's motto," Haig said of his character. "He really doesn't care about anything. He might like to kill somebody..." he laughed.

"We didn't treat any characters lightly," Zombie said of his ensemble cast. "If they're just there to die, then you don't care, it's like *FRIDAY THE 13TH*. That's not what we did at all."

During post-production, Zombie labored to whittle his movie down to a manageable

Black puts on a Halloween show in the barn for some unwary teenagers who are befriended by her brood.



“The producers and people behind [THE CROW] were so schizophrenic with what they wanted that I bailed,” said Zombie. “I could see it was going nowhere fast.”



Sheri Moon, Zombie's luminous significant other, plays Mother's Baby, wearing a wig to match Black's. "She's from a nice family of freaks," laughed Moon.

length. "I want the film to be 90 minutes; that's a good length," he said. "I think for the most part movies are too long. Now that everything's three hours long, people get bored."

Zombie's happy with Universal. "They've been great. It's a Universal picture but it's being done with that kind of independent film work ethic. At no point has Universal tried to influence me over who to cast or hire. It's great."

Once *HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES* screens in June, Zombie has plans for future films. "If this is successful, another one of these. Which I don't mind because I would want to make a sequel but where it's the further adventures, not just the same movie over again. If you have interesting characters that you can do something else bizarre with, then a sequel's fine."

Zombie is doing the music for the movie. "That's the other thing I hate about movies now: the music. Nearly all the music you hear in my film is '70s music, from a source, like the car radio. Other than that you hear sort of weird ambient music. It's not a rock video. I don't

want to throw music around so much."

Zombie does plan to make a new record in the beginning of 2001. It won't tie in with the film. "There will be a soundtrack album. The movie's set in 1977, so all the music is from that point backwards. It's the last hurrah of the drive-in," he said of his film. "I was trying to go for a '70s vibe. I just remember going to the drive-in in the '70s where there was *I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE*, *DAWN OF THE DEAD*, just the way those felt: raw, real. That's why we set it in the '70s, so we could retain that feel."

"We had 30 days to make the movie. Some were very, very long days. At the end, we sometimes went 18 hours. It's really hard on the actors. But everybody was awesome."

The tone of the film is dark, but not unrelievedly so. "There are humorous moments in the film. If you have well-rounded characters, then there are going to be humorous moments. There's every range of emotion, but there's never humor that makes light of the movie or its situations. We tried to make it so that it was

real."

Zombie has always been adamant about keeping it real. "Movies are so effects-heavy now that there's barely a moment on-screen that's real. I didn't want any computer-generated craziness."

"This is what I've always wanted to do," he said of moviemaking. "The music was kind of an accident. A happy accident, however."

One thing he won't be doing is a new *CROW* film. *HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES* was not to have been Zombie's first film. He was slated to write and direct *THE CROW III*. "I did write it, and I was supposed to direct it, and I worked on it for 18 months or so," he says, and you can hear the disappointment in his voice and the anger. "The producers and the people behind it were so schizophrenic with what they wanted that I just bailed, because I could see that it was going nowhere fast. They changed their minds every day about what they wanted. I had wasted enough time, and gave up. I would never get back in that situation again."

Surprisingly, Zombie's an optimist. "Oh well, things usually turn out the way they're supposed to, so I'm happy it never happened."

Zombie totally digs directing from his own script. "It's great. I don't know how anyone could do it any other way." But what if Quentin Tarantino walked up to him and said, "Oh, I'd love for you to direct this horror script I wrote?" "I'd never say never," he replied. "I have scripts that I want to write and do, but if it was the right person and the right script, then sure."

The trust that Universal has in Zombie bodes well for the film. He hopes for a wide release. "That's been the plan to open it pretty wide."

The film's trailer depicts a graveyard, a few glimpses of characters and a lot of quick shots of—something. But from cobbling together various cast and crew members' comments, the film would seem to be more *Tod Browning* than *James Whale*. But we'll just have to see. Zombie isn't talking. □

CORPSE EFX

Wayne Toth on his movie gig in *Zombie-land*.

By Denise Dumars

"The look of the movie is absolutely astonishing. I swear I've never seen anything like it," said Chris Hardwick who plays Jerry in *HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES*. "All the sets are just amazing. And this is a low-budget film! It kind of makes you wonder why they need to make \$50 million movies."

Hardwick effused over the



Bill Moseley as Otis, *Mother's* baby genius who leads her killer brood and dabbles in sculpting live subjects.

work of special effects artist Wayne Toth. "The makeup that they're doing is amazing. When you look at yourself in the mirror and you actually get disturbed because you can envision what you'd look like if something truly horrible happened to you—then that's pretty good makeup. If it looks that good in person then it has to look amazing on film."

Special effects makeup expert Wayne Toth has an impres-

sive resume. He's worked on numerous genre films, including *HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL*, *THE FACULTY*, *X FILES: THE MOVIE*, *LORD OF ILLUSIONS*, *ARMY OF DARKNESS* and many others. He's also worked on most of Rob Zombie's videos, and did work on the show for Zombie's concert tour.

Noted Toth of his work on *HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES*, "For what you'd expect from a Rob Zombie film, it's not heavy on special effects. Most of the stuff I did involved character makeup. Just a few characters required more than special effects makeup. One showpiece gag involved one character's death which I promise you will be one of the most memorable movie deaths you've ever seen. It probably won't register for a minute exactly what you're looking at."

Zombie kept everything so hush-hush it's hard to talk about the effects. "There were a couple of props that we made that were supposed to be living things at one time, so they had to be realistic. They had to be custom-made." And what about all those corpses? "I don't know if they reached the screen quota of 1000 corpses, but there are some in there," he replied. "And there are some other things you couldn't quite call corpses. People probably won't know what to make of them."

Toth liked Zombie's script and his approach to horror. "There are just the four hapless kids out doing research and they're just your average Joes,



Toth, a special effects makeup expert who worked on *Zombie's* rock tour, did freakish creations for the film (above) as well as character designs (left).

who wind up in the wrong place. They're on a hunt for roadside oddities, strange things like that. But they go through the ringer. It's not one of these pretty boy movies where everyone looks great all the time."

Rob likes the freaky people the best, however. "Yeah, there aren't too many ramifications for the bad guys in this movie," said Toth. "There's not the usual payoff where the good guys always win." This is not the typical reactionary horror movie where evil is punished at the end. "That's what's great about it," Toth laughed. "It'll get a better reaction just for that fact. In this movie, each scene gets weirder than the next. People aren't gonna have any idea what happens next."

How many designs did Rob come up with and how creative was Toth allowed to be? "Since I've worked with him in the past I already have a background knowing his tastes. We were always the guys who knew the references, some obscure horror movie that other people had never heard of. So there was a good level of communication in that sense. The fact that Rob can draw and illustrate helps too. He did illustrated concepts for all of the characters and the costume department used that to go by and we did too to some extent. We had a relatively short prepro-

duction time, so it was mostly Rob instructing us to do things he'd like. We did tests, sculpture approvals, that sort of thing."

Cast member Matthew McGrory "had the most extensive recurring makeup effects in the film. He was one of my main victims," Toth laughed. "But having done horror films before, he was no stranger to having weird stuff glued all over him. He was a real pro."

"Bill Moseley is one of the other guys who was my main makeup victim. He played Choptop in *TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE II*. He's almost the leader of the family in this film. He's like the driving force in the family. Rob was a fan of his character and met him last year up at Halloween Horror Nights where he was hosting a horror awards show. That's how he got into the movie."

Toth may go on to make Ted Nicolaou's next *SUBSPECIES* film. In the meantime, Toth runs his own company that makes props for haunted houses. To see a selection, visit www.exmortis.com on the Web. "My job kind of dictates what kind of films I work on," Toth says of his horror and SF work. "I do prosthetics, animatronics, that sort of thing. Wanting to do what I do for a living comes from a love of horror." □

THE MUMMY RETURNS

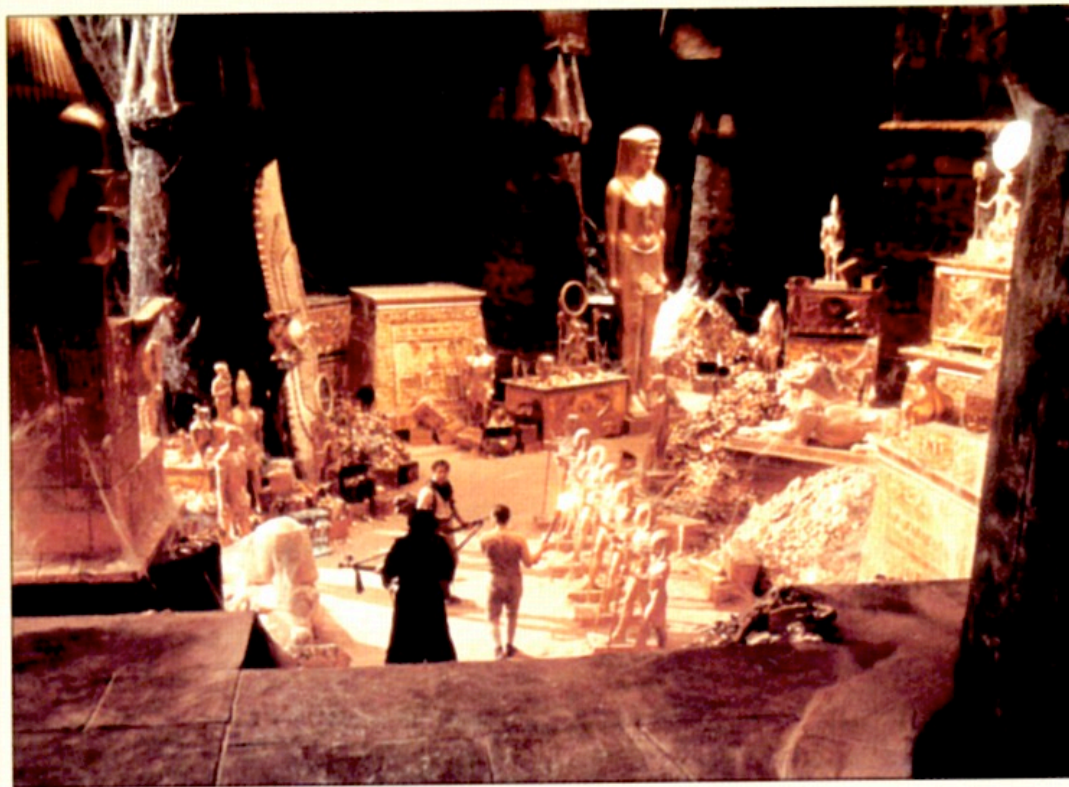
By Douglas Eby

Director and writer of both *THE MUMMY* and now *THE MUMMY RETURNS*, Stephen Sommers noted he was not specifically developing a sequel while working on the first film. "We had no idea how it was going to do. It was a mummy movie, who knows what it could have made? So I wasn't developing a sequel, but while making a movie like this, I just naturally start thinking, 'I wish I could have done this, or wouldn't it be neat if we had that?' By the end of making the first one, I said, jokingly to a bunch of people, 'If we ever do a sequel, it's going to be *THE MUMMY IN LONDON*' because I was so sick of the desert. It's really great out there, but after a while, enough is enough. But people love the romance of the desert, the beauty of the desert, so doing the sequel, I said I don't want to do the whole thing there, but a lot of it has to take place in the desert. That's what mummy movies are about, they take place mainly in Egypt." Universal opens Sommers' mummy

BACK IN GEAR: Brendan Fraser reprises his role as intrepid adventurer Rick O'Connell.



Bigger, better, darker, and scarier is the goal for the follow-up to the surprise hit.



LONGER, WIDER BANDAGES!: Director Stephen Sommers promises the scope of *THE MUMMY RETURNS* will far exceed that of its predecessor (above).

encore for the summer May 11.

But returning to the desert to shoot this time, the filmmakers encountered freak weather conditions. Actor Oded Fehr was quoted, "There have been floods, hailstorms, sandstorms—everything you can imagine. We have had the worst weather and it has been so bad that everybody working on the movie now believes in the curse of the mummy!"

Sommers said the idea of setting it partly in London would also be "a way to open it up, to change it. And then I had this idea of a lost oasis. So how the story came about is they're in

search of this lost oasis, so they'll have desert, London and the jungle. I thought, That will really open this movie up. And I think that's part of the reason this is so much bigger than the first one."

Referring to the tone of the film, Sommers noted, "I don't want to say it's darker, because lately dark seems bad somehow, like post-apocalyptic. I think this movie is a little scarier, a little more serious. There's still humor, and it's a lot of fun, more fun than the first one, but I think we've got a better tone. I think everyone who liked the first one will love this, but even some people who thought it

wasn't scary enough, or needed more horror—I think we'll even get those people this time."

Rachel Weisz as Evelyn/Evy O'Connell is again a central character, and this time is experiencing "trances and strange delusions or images from a past life, according to one reader of a screenplay draft. Sommers noted this element is "part of the back story. The movie takes place in three different time periods. In the first one, even though Brendan as O'Connell is the lead, it was about a librarian who has to go off on this huge adventure, and she becomes this adventuress." Sommers agreed Weisz is a very talented actress: "Take one; with Rachel, it's take one," he summarized.

As a brief summary, the story is set in 1935, some ten years after *THE MUMMY*, and again features adventurer Rick O'Connell (Brendan Fraser), now married to librarian Evy (Weisz), and they are raising their nine year-old son named Alex (Freddie Boath). While vacationing in Egypt, they discover and take an ancient gold bracelet which is sought by a group of four tomb raiders, who pursue the O'Connells back home to London. The thieves turn out to be in the employ of cohorts Meela (Patricia Velasquez, the reincarnation of Anck-Su-Namun, Imhotep's love, killed in the first story) and Lock-Nah. Finding the remains of Imhotep (Arnold Vosloo, the mummy) in the British Museum, and with the aid of the *Book of the Dead*, they resurrect him, plotting to rule the world.

Another character is the Scorpion King (played by wrestler Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, reportedly already signed on for a spinoff titled after his character), who had been



DIRECTOR STEPHEN SOMMERS

“By the end of making the first one, I jokingly said to a bunch of people, ‘If we do a sequel, it will be THE MUMMY IN LONDON.’ It’s really great in the desert, but enough is enough.”

TERWORLD) and editor, executive producer Bob Ducsay (RUDYARD KIPLING’S THE JUNGLE BOOK).

Jacks added, “In the end, will it do as much business? That’s for the movie gods to decide. A lot of things enter into that, but we’ve got a shot. The story’s a little more complex; the characters have a new stage to them; there’s more depth. But you can’t get carried away with all that stuff because, finally, you’re making a big popcorn movie.” He contrasted this to an earlier film of his: “When you go make a film like A SIMPLE PLAN for \$10 or \$15 million, you can afford to take chances creatively. When you’re spending close to a hundred million dollars, you’ve got to have a mass audience designed movie.”

Brendan Fraser, speaking to ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT reporters, commented, “If audiences respond as well as they did the first time around, then we’re definitely going to deliver even more of that kind of adventure and fun. There’s a particular brand of horror genre that, turned on its ear with the right dose of leavened humor, makes people feel like we’re not taking them or ourselves too seriously. But at the same time, we’ve got a lot of great special effects to back up the world we are creating, again.”

According to an article on the first film (“The Mummy, Resurrected” by Joe Fordham, CFQ 31:6), the ILM effects work under the supervision of John Burton took “close to 100 artists five months of research and development, two months of shooting, and ten months of post-production to complete.” For the new film, the effects budget for ILM is around \$20 million, and the film overall has a much bigger budget than the

first one. “We’ve spent more money on pretty much every department on this one,” Jacks affirmed. “Right now, I feel more comfortable than I ever felt on the first one, that we’ve made a movie at least as good, and probably better.”

Sommers affirmed it is a “much bigger, more complicated movie. I found it just mind-blowingly complicated. I’m thrilled right now to be able to say, ‘Yeah, we nailed it.’ Going in, we were all going, ‘How are we going to pull this thing off?’ It was so complicated. But I thought, I don’t want to spend two years of my life and not make something that is not better. A lot of people just knock off sequels. Well, from the studio’s point of view, it was too expensive to knock off, and from my point of view, it’s two years of my life, and I could have done two movies in the time. So our goal, and like talking with John Burton, was to make every shot better than in the first.” □



TEST OF LOVE: The now-married O’Connells (Brendan Fraser and Rachel Weisz) face ancient evils in **THE MUMMY RETURNS**.

defeated in battle. Selling his soul to Anubis (the god of the dead) to prevent his death, he was transformed into a half-man/half-scorpion. Conquering Thebes, he became the first pharaoh of Egypt. One of his descendants is killed by Imhotep in **THE MUMMY**, causing Imhotep to be mummified. The amulet bracelet that the O’Connells discover figures into the return to power of The Scorpion King, but Alex has put the bracelet on, and it can’t be removed. So Meela and her fellow schemers will have to kidnap him. Ardeth Bey (Oded Fehr) and others try to rescue Alex.

Producer Jim Jacks, who also made **THE MUMMY**, noted that “expectations for the first film were relatively low. We kind of snuck in under the radar. Nobody was considering it to be big, and it ended up being gigan-

tic; one of the 30 biggest movies of all time, internationally.” Universal reports it has taken in more than \$414 million worldwide so far. “Now, everyone’s expecting it to be this megamovie,” Jacks continued, “so the question is how do we exceed their expectations the way we did last time. That’s going to be tricky. This time, expectations are so much higher. But I think we’ve got a shot. I think Stephen did a great job, the actors did a great job. I’ve seen about three quarters of the movie cut together, without effects, and I feel we’ve made a better movie.” Filmmakers returning from the original film include producer Sean Daniel, Director of Photography Adrian Biddle (**THELMA AND LOUISE**); production designer Allan Cameron (**STARSHIP TROOPERS**); costume designer John Bloomfield (WA-

WRAPPED AMBITION: Arnold Vosloo (from **THE MUMMY**, below) reprises his role as Imhotep.





Reluctant adventurer: John Crichton (Ben Browder) finds himself cast adrift in the Uncharted Territories with only a shipful of fugitives as his allies.

FARSCAPE

In the Sci-Fi Channel's addictively unpredictable series, starships have babies and puppets can rule the worlds.

By Anna L. Kaplan

A scientist attempting humankind's first tentative step toward faster-than-light travel instead pilots his space capsule smack into a wormhole. He finds himself on a living ship, a former prison vessel piloted by a group of exotic, and occasionally fractious, alien fugitives. They are on the run, hunted by squadrons of "Peace Keepers" whose leader thinks his brother died at the scientist's hands (it was actually an accident; literally a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time). Thrust into a universe whose parameters he's only beginning to understand, the scientist—John Crichton—must cope quick if he is to survive at all. Houston, we have one helluva problem.

FARSCAPE is the best science fiction/fantasy show on television. The product of a union between writer Rockne S. O'Bannon (ALIEN NATION, SEAQUEST DSV), Brian Henson, and The Henson Company, FARSCAPE tells the story of astronaut John Crichton (Ben Browder)—a guy more Han Solo than Captain Kirk—who faces his predicament with a wry sense of humor and a contemporary cross-reference for every occasion. He needs all the call-backs he can muster, for the world he lands himself in is at turns bizarre, dangerous, and at times totally incomprehensible.

The main characters in FARSCAPE are not part of any command structure, military or otherwise. There are no rules. The show goes wherever executive producer David Kemper, his writing staff, directors, and actors want it to go. You can never predict what is going to happen, or what the tone of an episode will be, or whether any of the characters you've come to know and love (and, at times, loathe) will make it through an hour with their skins intact. FARSCAPE says that it is real, like life. People do good things and bad things, they fall in love, they break up, they run away, they die.

Made in Australia, FARSCAPE boasts



Allies at random: Above: The original crew of the former prison ship Moya, thrown together by happenstance. Right: Chiana (Gigi Edgley) would join the complement further into the first season.

top-notch visual effects, costumes, and makeup. The FARSCAPE aliens, from the bald, blue and beautiful Zhaan (Virginia Hey), to the tentacled Luxan Ka D'Argo (Anthony Simcoe), to the diminutive Hynarian Dominar Rygel (voiced by Jonathan Hardy), do not look as if they walked off a STAR TREK set. There are no Jiffy-Pop foreheads or slapped-on nose-pieces. You will see detailed, airbrushed makeups and astonishing prosthetic pieces, plus puppets so adult-oriented they probably wouldn't think twice about noshing down on Miss Piggy (after a nice appetizer of Kermit frog legs, of course). The team of skilled individuals working behind the camera, literally in the shadow of the Sydney Olympics, bring all their talents and passion to the project. Many came from or have gone on to the world of feature film, having worked on such projects as THE MATRIX, STAR WARS, SAVING PRIVATE RYAN, and DARK CITY. While most of the writing staff and lead Browder are American, just about everyone else is Australian.

Millions of viewers in the United States watch FARSCAPE, which starts its third season on the Sci-Fi Channel on March 16, 2001. Fans have already coalesced into a distinctive subculture—they call themselves "Scapers." Catch a couple of

episodes, and you may just file for membership yourself.

CONCEPTION: CAPT PICARD NEED NOT APPLY

The first steps toward FARSCAPE began with the meeting of Brian Henson and series creator Rockne S. O'Bannon. Some seven or eight years ago, they were brought together at the suggestion of agent Bill Haber one of the founders of the Creative Artists Agency. Remembers O'Bannon, "The Henson Company is represented by CAA, as am I. They said, 'We'd love you to go meet with Brian Henson. He's got a type of show that he'd like



to do, and we think you guys would work. It would be a great meeting of the minds.' I went and met with Brian. He had taken over for his father some years earlier, and wanted to do a show that would show all the facets of what The Henson Company could do. At that point, I think he was feeling comfortable enough in his role as head of the company that he wanted to start putting his own imprimatur on it. Being younger, Brian's tendency is to push the company into a more adult arena, obviously keeping the Puppets and the family stuff very much alive. But his own interest was to move a little more into adult fare, and to really show what the company could do in terms of animatronics. They'd had a series, DINOSAURS, on ABC, which was on a couple of years, and it did pretty well, it showed that animatronics could be done on

FARSCAPE EPISODE GUIDE

By Anna L. Kaplan

FARSCAPE airs in the United States on the Sci-Fi Channel. Episodes aired out of order, as noted.

SEASON ONE

"And there's life out here, Dad—weird, amazing, psychotic life, and in Technicolor."
—John Crichton

PREMIERE. ★★★★★

Production #10101. Airdate 3/19/99. Written by Rockne S. O'Bannon. Directed by Andrew Prowse.

Astronaut John Crichton (Ben Browder) launches his Farscape module from a space shuttle to test the theory that the Earth's gravity can be used to increase his speed. When sudden solar activity occurs, a wormhole opens, throwing him across the universe. He finds himself in the middle of a battle between Peacekeepers and the prisoners on-board a biomechanoid ship named Moya. His module collides

a weekly series. But again, it was a family show. They wanted to do a thing on a ship—they didn't know really when it took place. They had a bunch of ideas for some characters, none of whom eventually wound up in the show.

"I went away and thought about it, and came back with the notion not to do five-hundred years in the future, not to do 'A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away,' but to do it today. Take a contemporary character, and drop him in the middle of this kind of STAR TREK/STAR WARS kind of world, and allow him to react in the way we would react. That really became the linchpin, the center piece to the pitch that I put together, that we went to the Fox Network with at that time, and sold.

"It's my claim that, with everything else that spilled out around it, the thing that still stays at the center, the thing that allows us to do all the humor and so much of the character stuff, is the fact that you have a man from our time there. You always have this hope that he will be able to return to his home, and so there is this wonderful longing, this sense of having your home so inaccessible, that is very important to me. That is why at the end of the premiere episode, Crichton does that 'note in a bottle,' the message to his father. We reprise that at the end of the first season, that notion of sending a message out there, hoping that someday it might find its way home. It's the attempt to keep some kind of contact with home that is a very important thing to me. The show, I think, has kept that: each of the other characters, each for his or her own purpose, is looking for a way to get back home. That was an important foundational element for the series."

Things got more complicated as O'Ban-

"The thing that stays at the center of the show, and allows us to do the humor and character stuff, is the fact that you have a man from our time there."

—Rockne S. O'Bannon—

non and Henson tried to actually get the show made. When they pitched the project—then called SPACE CHASE—to Fox, recalled O'Bannon, "Fox loved the notion. I wrote the pilot script. They flipped over the pilot script. They said, 'We'd love to do a pilot.' Brian and I looked at each other. This isn't shooting a cop drama in Santa Monica—we have to

build sets, we have to build creatures, we have CGI elements that have to be built. It's going to cost a lot of money to do a pilot. Fox was still in a place at that time where they would only order a pilot. If they ordered the pilot and they liked it, they would literally order in six episode increments. They were not even into thirteen episodes, and certainly not into full season commitments.

"They said, 'We love the pilot script, but we don't know exactly what we are going to get. How much do you need?' We crunched the numbers and said, 'We need an eleven-episode commitment to amortize the cost of building all these things.' They were right on the fence. They gave us more money to develop backup scripts, so they could get a sense of the way the story was going to go. They gave us some money to develop more creature design, and more sketches, that sort of thing. They were working really hard with us to try to get to a point where they were comfortable giving us the money to make eleven episodes. This was January of '94. This is when I brought David in."

Said executive producer David Kemper, "I had just come off of SEAQUEST, the last show Rockne created, and I was working on a STAR TREK: VOYAGER, the third episode ['Time and Again'] and also a STARGATE. Rockne said, 'Will you help



The Farscape module enters a wormhole; eyeball-melting transport to mind-bending adventure, from "Premiere."

with a small Peacekeeper craft, accidentally causing the death of the pilot. The prisoners on Moya bring Crichton's module aboard, hoping he can help them.

He is confronted by his new travelling companions: the diminutive, deposed Hynerian sovereign, Dominar Rygel XVI (voice: Jonathan Hardy, puppeteer: John Eccleston), the blue Delvian priestess Pa'u Zotoh Zhaan (Virginia Hey), the Luxan warrior Ka D'Argo (Anthony Simcoe), and the ship's pilot Pilot (voice Lani Tupu). Moya manages a maneuver called the Starburst to escape the Peacekeepers, dragging along a PK-piloted Prowler. The aliens at first think Crichton is Sebacean, like the Peacekeepers, but even when they learn he isn't, they keep him locked up with the captured pilot, Officer Aeryn Sun (Claudia Black). Crichton and Aeryn escape when the prisoners stop at a Commerce Planet to get supplies and make repairs, but are caught, along with D'Argo, by Crais. When Aeryn tries to speak up for Crichton, she finds herself denounced by Captain Crais, who believes Crichton is responsible for the death of his brother, the PK pilot Crichton encountered after his sudden appearance. Rather than face death—or worse—Crichton engineers escape for himself, D'Argo, and Aeryn. Returning safely to Moya, Crichton is now a hunted man on a ship full of fugitives, lost in the middle of the Uncharted Territories.

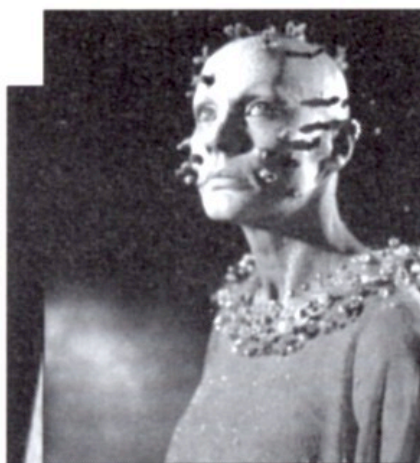
"You've altered the perceptions and beliefs of an entire planet... I guess that's enough for one day."
—John Crichton.

I, ET ★★1/2

Production #10102. Airdate 5/7/99. Written by Sally Lapiduss. Directed by Pino Amenta.

The group discover a Peacekeeper transmitter

GROWING INTO A PART: Developed as your stock, alien mystic, Zhaan (Virginia Hey, below), soon developed a richer personality. Left: Zhaan sprouting.





Soul of the machine: Permanently bound to the Leviathan Moya, Pilot shares the giant ship's sensations and moods, and conceals a few secrets of his own.

me with this? I've got to do four scripts.' We had to turn in four episodes in May, and we were frantic to get them done for Fox. He reads one of my scripts; I am really proud of it. He looks at me and says, 'This is not what I wanted.' It was a really good script, but it wasn't FARSCAPE, it wasn't yet there. He knew what he wanted, and he had to convey it to me. It took a long time."

Continued O'Bannon, "At the same time, I spent a lot of time with the London Creature Shop, not physically, but working on the maquettes, designing the creatures. The Pilot maquette, the Pilot you see now is essentially the same. The console was redesigned by Ricky Eyres to fit in with everything else, but the actual creature, Pilot, is identical. Rygel is essentially identical. D'Argo is very, very different. D'Argo was kind of like the creatures in DINOSAURS. He was a big, full-body suit, and a fully animatronic head. When we finally sold the series to the Sci-Fi Channel and started to rethink what we were going

to do, we realized that this is one of the key characters in the show. We want an actor to be able to emote; we don't want it to be a puppeteer and do the voice afterward. Rygel or Pilot are essential characters but they're ones that we can kind of keep off to the side. D'Argo wasn't going to be that way. We wanted him to be a physical presence, and a big guy in a suit couldn't role and tumble.

"Zhaan, in the original script, was a man. In the maquette, he was blue in color. It wasn't something we ended up really liking. We would show him in

meetings because we had him. He was Buddha-like and it was too on-the-nose. But we went back in June, with the scripts, and the maquettes, and showed them to Fox. Fox was very noncommittal."

They could not sell SPACE CHASE to Fox. But O'Bannon and Kemper continued to discuss the show. Recalled Kemper, "We had all these theoretical conversations, like didactic arguments, about what it was like. He had a vision. I was absorbing his vision. After the show didn't sell, we would go to lunch for years and we would talk about the show, knowing it would never go. 'If that show had gone...' and then we would do stories. We would talk about the characters as though the show had sold, when in fact it hadn't. We were in such a sync from the beginning. I knew what he wanted for the series, I just knew. It was in my bones. We are very close, Rock and I, and we get each other, tremendously. I know what he's thinking. He knows what I am thinking. I had absorbed like 80% of what I needed to know,

by the time the show was picked up."

O'Bannon and Henson did not give up. Said O'Bannon, "We went out and pitched it to a couple of other places. Bill Haber championed this project, so we would get in and we would have meetings. Henson and I obviously went our separate ways on projects. But Brian and I would stay in touch, and always try and find a home for it. Every once in a while we would dust the maquettes off, have them sent back from London, and pitch it

Another reason to avoid HMOs: When you call for a surgeon in the *Uncharted Territories*, you're likely to get the below.



hidden on Moya which is broadcasting their location. To remove it would cause her great pain and possibly death to the sentient starship. In an effort to muffle the signal, they land Moya on an inhabited planet, in a swamp, where she starts to sink. While Rygel and Zhaan remain on Moya, trying to remove the tracking device, Aeryn, D'Argo, and John go off to look for the anesthetic clorium. They discover that, on this world, no one has ever seen an alien, and only a scientist named Lyneea (Mary Mara)—proprietor of a SETI-like radar station—is able to help John, and then D'Argo, escape from their paranoid military.

Said O'Bannon, "The thing that was tried very early on, that David Kemper and I resisted ardently, was the notion of shooting two episodes at the same time. It was obviously an attempt to amortize costs and set usage: We would take two shows, and then just cross-pollinate the scripts, so that you'd have one director shooting two scripts at the same time. Everything that needed to be shot on the command [set] for the two episodes would be shot at the same time, and so on. Naturally, the directors would tend to pick one of the two scripts that they would focus on, and the other one would kind of fall by the wayside. That's why we shot 'I, ET' at the same time as 'Throne For A Loss.' 'Throne For A Loss' really looks pretty good, pretty terrific. 'I, ET' is a script that I did some polishing on and am very proud of, and a premise that I am very proud of—to me,



D'Argo gets a firsthand acquaintance with the meaning of the word "xenophobia" in "I, ET."

very essential to the show. All that stuff is in there, but the episode itself is pretty funky."

This explained why the episode aired later in the season. "'I, ET' as far as I am concerned really is the perfect second episode for the show," said O'Bannon. "In hindsight it would have been wonderful if 'I, ET' had aired in the second position, and for fans of the show who can look at the show in a more overview kind of a way, it would have been fine. From the network's point of view, and I think they were very right at that time, they didn't want to put 'I, ET' second. They wanted to put something that was more accomplished, had more action and energy, because the first episodes of any shows are very important. But if you watch the show again, I'm very proud of it, because of the tone in terms of John just first arriving there, and that notion for Crichton of being the alien."

'I, ET' appears in its preferred place as second episode in the FARSCAPE tapes being released by ADV Video.

"No offense, human, what could I possibly need from you?"

—Aeryn

EXODUS FROM GENESIS

★ 1/2

Production #10103. Airdate 3/26/99. Written by Ro Hume. Directed by Brian Henson.

Moya uses a cloud in space to hide from a Peacekeeper Marauder. The cloud turns out to be a mass of space insects, who invade the ship in the

search for someplace very warm to nest and reproduce. As the "Draks" override Moya's systems and turn up the heat, Aeryn—who because of her Sebacean blood cannot tolerate heat—becomes sick. To further complicate the others' attempts to figure out what is going on, the insects possess the ability to make replicants of the real beings on the ship. On top of all of this, the Marauder gets on board, and Peacekeepers try to retake Moya.

Said David Kemper, "'Exodus From Genesis' didn't come off as hard as it should have. Our show is tougher and more real than it was back then. Brian came down to direct it. Rock was the one who urged Brian to direct, so he could see the problems and help us with them. Brian was the only one who knew how to direct puppets, how to utilize them, what tricks can you do to save an hour of shooting. A puppet takes a long time to move around—you only have ten hours a day. Brian had tricks, because of all the movies [the Henson Company] had done."

"Rygel is an obnoxious gas bag, and who is going to shell out for that?"

—John Crichton

THRONE FOR A LOSS

★★★

Production #10104. Airdate 4/9/99. Written by Richard Manning. Directed by Pino Amenta.

Rygel steals a jewel-like, essential component from Moya in order to negotiate with the Tavleks. When the Tavleks come on board to trade, they shoot Zhaan and take Rygel prisoner. One injured Tavlek is left on Moya, and D'Argo puts on the intruder's gauntlet weapon, discovering that it releases an aggression-provoking and addictive stimulant into the system of the user. The others have to knock D'Argo out to remove the gauntlet. The Tavleks take Rygel down to their planet, where they keep other hostages. They think that his subjects will pay for his release, not understanding that he is a deposed monarch. Aeryn, John and D'Argo go down to the planet to



Weaned from the dark side: Captured by the crew of Moya, the Peacekeeper Aeryn (Claudia Black) finds herself fleeing her own forces when she is branded a traitor.

somewhere. Everybody liked what they saw. But it's tough to say, 'I'm going to make this commitment,' because it is such a pricey commitment, until Rod Perth, over at the Sci-Fi Channel, got his hands on a couple of the scripts and absolutely fell in love.

"They were looking for the show to be the cornerstone of original programming. We met with Rod, and he said, 'We'll give 22 episodes. We'd love to do this.' It was me, Brian, and Alex Rockwell, a woman who had been the champion of this at The Henson Company. We left Rod's office and hugged each other and looked at each other and said, 'How are we going to actually do this?' Then Rod left Sci-Fi Channel, and Stephen Chao took over, inherited the show. Until you see what's being made and presented, you don't really know what you've got. So I think he was [thinking], 'I've inherited this show, and it's from the Puppet people. I want an edgier kind of network. What is this thing I've got?' He was somewhat wary of the parentage and the concept, and what it could be, in terms of The Henson Company and the fact that it's got puppets in it. He would push and say, 'I want this

show to be as alien as possible. You've got aliens in this show. I want them to act like aliens. I do not want them to be humans wearing masks and acting like humans do.' "It was very much, in a big way, his influence that allowed us the freedom to do what FARSCAPE has become. I took that right to heart. If that's what he wants, that's what we are going to give him. For someone who has cut his teeth on science fiction television, everywhere from CBS to Fox to NBC, it's wonderful to hear a network not saying, 'Is this really going to be accessible and comfortable and understandable to everybody?' It was a guy saying, essentially, without saying the words, 'I don't think your premise is outrageous enough for my network, so prove it by making it outrageous.' It gave us, not only the impetus, but the freedom to be audacious."

As they went to work on the show, Kemper picked up more of O'Bannon's vision. He said, "So then, the other 20% came as we were putting the show together. I was there from the very first day, from the very first meeting in October of '97, and Rockne would go, 'This is what I want.' He would tell

Henson, and I would hear something new, like a word that was new, a sentence that was new. He'd describe D'Argo a little bit differently. Then he would go to the next department, and he'd talk about it and there would be another sentence that was new. Over time, I picked up another 10% of what the show should be. When we started writing scripts we would have these debates in the room, and that is where I picked up the last 10% of what he wanted the show to be. As the show went on, I would throw stuff in and Rock would go, 'Hey, that's a great idea.' I knew what he wanted, so I could now come up with my own ideas that were

right in line with what he wanted. We rocketed off from there.

"The problem was, we had no writers. It was just me and him for awhile. Then we had a couple of writers come in who didn't work out, ultimately. Then Ricky Manning came in. He did one of the very first stories, and once we saw his script, it was like, 'Okay, this guy is never leaving. No way are we going to let him get away.' That's how Ricky joined us." Richard

continued on page 34

The other side of paradise: Early episodes offered such plots as D'Argo falling in thrall to a euphoric foodstuff.



Crichton tries on the the Tarlek gauntlet, not necessarily the wisest of moves.
From "Throne for a Loss."

try to find Rygel and retrieve the crystal, which Moya needs. In the end, both Aeryn and John are forced to use the gauntlet to accomplish their mission.

This script was written by then-freelancer Richard Manning, who pitched an idea the producers already had about Crichton impersonating a Peacekeeper. He had to rethink it. "My take on the story was that perhaps the armored clash suits worn by Peacekeeper soldiers injected them with performance-enhancing drugs," Manning explained, "and maybe mind-control drugs as well to keep them loyal to the Peacekeeper cause. Crichton, not knowing this, would don a clash suit and find himself turning into a nasty Peacekeeper. Rock and David liked the notion of soldiers on steroids, and as we kicked ideas around, the story evolved into something else entirely. The script was great fun

FARSCAPE

Ben Browder

The American actor is determined to make John Crichton a wiseguy for the ages.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Some people are born to heroism, some achieve heroism, and others are blown across the universe and frankly have no flippin' say in the matter. FARSCAPE's John Crichton, played by Ben Browder, is not your conventional hero. He could be any of the audience, having his mettle tested every day on the sentient starship Moya. Rarely does an actor have the opportunity to show the range of moods that Browder, as Crichton, demonstrates on every FARSCAPE episode.

Not that this atypical hero didn't at first confuse some viewers. Maybe they thought Crichton would be more like the gung-ho jet and helicopter jockey Browder played in the 1998 TV movie THE SKY'S ON FIRE. Said the actor, "I think that there were certain people that expected John to be Racer. Most series, most action pieces, most science fiction pieces have this serious leading man who doesn't crack jokes. One of the great things about playing John is that I get to crack jokes, jokes the audience knows and you and I know, but no one else around John knows. That's what really makes it funny."

Most of FARSCAPE's initial humor came out of John Crichton's situation, his bewilderment, and his contemporary references. While Crichton's pop-cult worldview was clearly charted out in the scripts, Browder eventually took the tip, improvising his own jokes on-set. Some of the humor made the



PORTRAIT OF THE MAN IN THE THICK OF IT: John Crichton thought he was merely going to re-write the rules of space transport. Instead, he's a fugitive on the run from madmen and megalomaniacs.

cut, some didn't, and the rest was deferred for later episodes. By season two, though, Browder was re-thinking some of Crichton's jokes. He said, "I look at Crichton's jokes—if it plays on three levels, or two levels, then I am usually happy with it. If it's just a contemporary joke that's got a limited shelf life, I don't know. I tend to prefer the more classic references. You can talk about The Three Stooges, and I reckon The Three Stooges has thirty years of shelf-life, at least. You sort of know what's going to be classic. We finally got a good Bill Clinton joke; Nixon still has life in the realm of jokes. That's one of the things I try to look at when we look at the pop-cultural references. And if they don't play as pop-culture jokes, I like them to play on a verbal level, so that at least they make sense to John Crichton in

his twisted view."

Then again, when one has to hold forth against a cast with a heavy Muppet component, a sense of humor can only help. No problem, said Browder: "I absolutely love the fact that I can work with puppets and do comedy. That's the great thing about Rygel: He's the perfect Punch and Judy guy. I've gotten to the point now where every week or so I figure something new out. In Season One, in 'Back And Back And Back To The Future,' they had written a scene where I come in, and I scream really loudly and it causes Rygel to start choking. I'm having these flash-forwards, and I was matching my moves in the flash-forwards to my moves in the present. So in one I was getting hit by Matala—I think she kneed me—which was supposed to cause me to scream. I

said [to director Rowan Woods], 'What if I fall forward, and I hit Rygel, and Rygel hits the table, and that causes him to choke. Wouldn't that be better? Can a puppet do that?' This is where we discovered we could hit the puppet. I hit him, and he came up choking, and it was hysterical."

Browder laughed. "You have to be careful where you hit Rygel, because he costs more than I do. I love the fact that he

is little, and he gets that disrespect, and he doesn't take it. It's a great character thing for him—one of the motifs of the series is, 'Shut up Rygel. Shut up Fluffy. Shut up

Sparky.' I re-learned that in 'A Clockwork Nebari' this year. I just thought that we were weak in what we were doing, and Rygel was being a jerk.

"I said, 'You know what? He's being a jerk. I am tired of him being a jerk. How about if I just cold-clock him?' It works beautifully. He's yammering on about something, he's giving up the ship, he's betraying us again. I just backhand the hell out of the puppet. It was great. Hitting that puppet, he is the best. Punch and Judy is the classic puppet show—all they did was smack each other around. You can't deny the classics."

Browder seems truly happy playing Crichton, even though, during a lot of the second season, the character's behavior was truly bizarre. The audience



got its first inkling of the human's growing instability in "Crackers Don't Matter," when Crichton goes to slay the bad guy covered in vomit, and wearing goggles, a cape, and a floppy hat. Said Browder, "Writers write the words. They are responsible for the story, and we're responsible for telling it. Nonetheless, they sort of put me in a position to make adjustments. In 'Crackers Don't Matter,' David Kemper made Justin Monjo write this scene where Crichton throws the sword up. He's got puke on his face, and he's got that sword. If that scene didn't work, then we were screwed. Even on the day, I am going [to director Ian Watson], 'Ian, I don't know. I don't know how this is going to play. I have no idea. I assume Kemper has a plan.' Ian goes, 'You can either be down, or you can embrace it.'

"So that scene, the camera pulls back. Crichton is there, and he lifts the sword, and Claudia Black improvises, 'We are going to die.' It wasn't in the script. It was a perfect response. On the day when you are standing there, and you are looking at everybody, you are thinking exactly what Claudia Black says.

"Turns out Kemper knew what he was doing, because it works, and it's really funny. David Kemper has this idea of Crichton the Ridiculous, Justin

Monjo writes this fantastic script setting it up, then Claudia improvises this beautiful thing, and Ian pulls the camera back. When we get to ADR, during the pull-back, I wasn't doing anything, I was just standing there, so they say, 'Ben, could you vocalize something there?' So in ADR I do this little hum of 'Ride of the Valkyries.' It timed out just perfectly with Claudia's line: 'We are going to die.' That's FARSCAPE."

Even Browder admits, though, that FARSCAPE can be a hard series to nail down. "Look at what people have pegged as essentially the two best episodes of the [second season's] first six: 'The Way We Weren't' and 'Crackers Don't Matter.' Those two beasts bear very little in common. But that's the nature of this show, that we can do those two different pieces and they still make sense in the context of the universe which we are in. That's the bravery of David

“I said, ‘You know what? He’s being a jerk. What if I just cold-clock him?’ It was great. Hitting a puppet, it’s the best.”

—Ben Browder, on the “special” relationship between Rygel and Crichton—

Kemper and the writing department; that's the guts of Sci-Fi to say, 'Go ahead, do that;' The Henson Company to support it, and our directors to go, 'Okay, this week on

conceptually, it was fun. That piece is kind of weird, because I love the first ten, fifteen minutes of that show. Then it just went off somewhere else. It was one of those deals where, if you try for something, you may get it, you may not. I thought, Well, we missed. It's interesting because it's kind of a transition piece: It's in the middle of season one; it was where we were sort of evolving out of FARSCAPE Lite into FARSCAPE the weird and dark. But in the middle of that, as we realized that we had the freedom to do almost anything, we fell flat on our face. The art department had one idea, the writers had another. The directors had an idea and

FARSCAPE...’ Never were truer words spoken than, ‘This week on FARSCAPE...’ It's that FORREST GUMP box of chocolates: You don't know



Kindnesses and cruelty: John Crichton has often found himself cast into situations both absurd and grotesque—including confronting alien sex (below)—when they're not downright horrific (upper right).

the actors had an idea, and none of it coalesced. That's the danger.

"Generally speaking, you get a sense sometimes when you are shooting, especially watching rushes,

what you are going to get.

"That's great. Think about playing with that toy set, if you are a director or an actor or a writer. If you do a regular TV show, they set the format, they set the style. It's true on almost every television show on the air—even ALLY MCBEAL has a style. We kind of break style on a weekly basis, and hope and pray that our fans will love us for it."

The actor laughed wickedly and said, "We'll do 'Jeremiah Crichton.' I loved the beard. It was a little too groomed, but,

that this is either going to be good or bad. But that was one of those episodes that we couldn't wrangle. It wasn't that difficult a story. In the attempt to make it, we just lost it. We have other shows that I like more, and other shows that I like less, but I look at that one and go, 'Okay. I've got a place in the backyard to bury that one. They'll be digging that one up.' See the lost episode of season one: Episode 14, originally aired in 1999! That was our glorious failure of season one, as far as I am concerned."



For all of FARSCAPE's humor, though, it was when Crichton descended into insanity during Season Two that the program was able to explore its darker aspects. After "Crackers Don't Matter," the writer/producers made the decision that Scorpius had put a chip in Crichton's head which slowly activated a clone of the alien villain. The clone influenced Crichton's behavior, saved his life, and prevented John from killing the real Scorpius. Said Browder, "The whole Crichton-Scorpie thing was an outgrowth of something that happened early in the season, something we had been talking about but



DEHUMAN TOUCH: In season one, John Crichton was still grounded enough to bond with a young, human-like alien (above). By season two, the Uncharted Territories had taken their toll. Enter Crichton the Ridiculous (left).



by Browder, through the remainder of the season. When the "Look at the Princess" story arc was expanded from a two-parter to a three-parter, ways were found to insinuate Crichton's virtual nemesis into the plot—eventually leading to the creation of one of the series' stand-out set-pieces: the Jakench cockpit escape. Said Browder, "When he is in the cockpit and

weren't sure how to do. David found a fantastic way to do it, a way to take a state of mind—a mental-intellectual state—and physicalize it.

"When we got into the stuff in 'Crackers Don't Matter' where Crichton is hallucinating Scorpie, I was bucking for the final moment to be: Zhaan walks out, Crichton is alone, and either you just hear Scorpie's voice, or Scorpie's hand comes in to rest on John's shoulder, and he goes, 'They just don't get it, John.'

After "Crackers Don't Matter," hallucinations of Scorpius were seeded, by the writers and

he goes, 'No. No,' he's hearing Scorpie's voice. That wasn't in the script. That last sequence—from the time that Braca leaves to the time that Crichton goes to the airlock—was done in one single, massive take, with a camera here, camera there—Steadycam. All the pyros were live, so it was really dangerous.

"I said, 'Before I leave the ship, I've got to have a moment of stillness. I've just got to have that moment.' We sort-of rehearsed the moves: The camera guys are there, and stuff is blowing up everywhere, and I stop. We only have one take at it—there are no alternatives. It

took two-and-a-half hours to set up the pyros; Steadycam operators are covered in blankets; they've got helmets and masks on. Everybody has got to be perfect. It's going off everywhere, and I just stopped and I said, 'No. No.' That was me talking to Scorpie. An explosion goes off, which is perfectly timed—I just hit it right.

"I got done and Andrew Prowse says, 'What were you doing there?' 'Talking to Scorpius.' He goes, 'Perfect, perfect.' The writers bought it, and so we seeded it in a little more concrete fashion."

After a season of growing insanity, Crichton finally turned into Scorpius, in a fashion. Recalled Browder, "[With 'Crackers Don't Matter,] I said, 'David, this is really, truly why he is nuts: It's Scorpius. Scorpius is in his head.' David took it one step further—he's got this capacity to take a visual image and use it as kind of hammer to nail down what is interesting. David found this visual image which expressed the madness: Fold your leading man into his arch-nemesis; have him wander around, saying, 'I'm Scorpius.' It's a powerful image."

Browder in fact donned the same Scorpius makeup as Wayne Pygram, leaving viewers—and quite a few FARSCAPE staff member—hard-pressed to make the dis-

inction. Laughed Browder, "I'm walking around the set and people are going, 'Hey Wayne.' That was scary." Shifting into a spot-on imitation of Pygram's Scorpius, Browder continued, "'John Crichton, alive, hm-mm... yes. The trouble with being John is things are very... difficult.'"

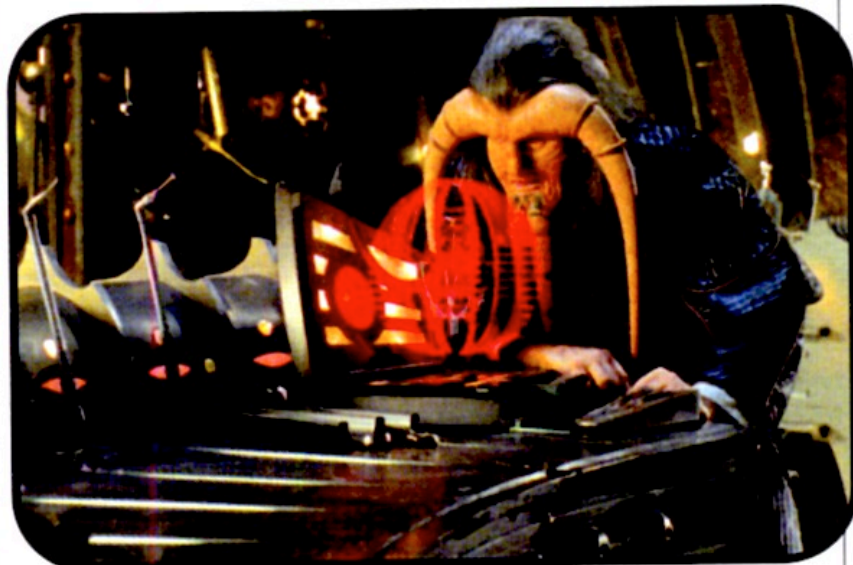
He continued laughing, "It was wicked. I was going into heavy prosthetics, and nobody knew who I was. They sort of wander around and ignore you, because they don't know you—it was fantastic. You can eavesdrop on conversations; people going, 'That Ben Browder is such an asshole.' I didn't actually hear a lot of that, but I was hoping that I would catch somebody out.

"We are ending this season, hopefully, in similar fashion to the way we ended last season. Claudia Black's death scene was amazing—it's a shame she won't be with us next year. And I'm there with my head laid open on a table, so no Earth quips for next year.

"It's up to David whether any of us survive the events in here, and they haven't exercised my option. They're probably going to take my chunk of brain and stick it in a young Aussie bloke, with really nice rippling biceps—probably nineteen, twenty years old. Maybe I need to be looking for work." □

to write because Rock and David constantly encouraged me to let loose and push the boundaries. When I handed in my first draft, I told David that I'd come up with some bits for Zhaan that hadn't been in the story outline, and perhaps I'd gone too far. David replied that I couldn't have gone too far. Those added bits, such as the young, captured soldier 'flashing' Zhaan to provoke her, and Zhaan calmly dropping her robe and flashing him right back, survived into the final episode."

The Tavleks returned at the end of Season Two.



The Ilanice Verell at work, a scientist concealing a life-threatening secret; from "Back and Back and Back to the Future"

"What is the matter with him?"
"He is Crichton."

—Aeryn
—Zhaan

BACK AND BACK AND BACK TO THE FUTURE

★★★1/2

Production #10105. Airdate 4/2/99. Written by Babs Greyhosky. Directed by Rowan Woods.

The group on Moya witness the subatomic disintegration of a large ship. A small, damaged transport pod survives, and comes on board. On it are two Ilanice, genetic cousins to Luxans: one female, Matala (Lisa Hensley), and a male, Verell (John Clayton). When Crichton goes onto their transport to help them off, he touches a green, glowing energy, and begins experiencing temporally confusing hallucinations. D'Argo, drawn to Matala, is disposed to help the two, but Crichton soon starts to have flashes of the future, in which he sees many different possible outcomes, with Matala killing various crew members and Moya disintegrating. Crichton tries to make sense of it all, with Zhaan and Aeryn's help.

Many people working on FARSCAPE pick this episode as an early favorite, including Ben Browder and Virginia Hey. Said director Rowan Woods, "There is a rich history in TV and film of stories that deal with interesting time tricks that I'm usually reticent when I hear there is a time-trick episode on the table. I was relieved that it actually had an interesting, compelling new spin on your flashback, flash-forward clichés. The fact that Crichton first thinks he's being affected by the sexual pheromones of an alien female was interesting enough; for that to transform itself into something else before he figured out exactly what the nature of the flash-forward was, meant the audience was in for a cool, unpredictable ride. When you try to change events of the future and are continually foiled by the events of the present, you have a great jigsaw puzzle. Benny and all the actors did a great job on that episode, especially considering they were so new to the characters, and were still working things out."

"This is great. You're trading in your pulse rifle for the junior chemistry set."
"Well, my pulse rifle wasn't any use to me this time."

—Crichton
—Aeryn

THANK GOD IT'S FRIDAY. AGAIN ★★★1/2

Production #10106. Airdate 4/23/99. Written by David Wilks. Directed by Rowan Woods.

D'Argo leaves the ship in a fit of Luxan hyper-

Manning, who is well-known to STAR TREK fans, joined FARSCAPE initially as executive consultant. By the middle of season two, he became an executive producer.

Recalled Manning, "In October 1997, I pitched some ideas for science-fiction TV series to Marcy Ross at The Jim Henson Company. Marcy liked one of my notions, but didn't want to go forward with it at that time because Henson Productions already had a "space" series of its own, something called SPACE CHASE, that they were still hoping to produce. Sure enough, a month later, Sci-Fi Channel gave Henson the go-ahead for 22 episodes. On board with Rockne was David Kemper, whom I'd met on STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION. David remembered me from TREK, but despite that, he and Rock invited me in to do a script for SPACE CHASE."

O'Bannon said, "People like David and myself and Ricky Manning have done a lot of science fiction over the years, and really hit a point where we were poised to do something, excited at the notion of not having to do something that was exactly the sort of stuff we've done before."

How did the production get to Australia? "Nobody knew exactly how that would factor into the show," O'Bannon explained. "When we first sold Rod Perth, we knew we wanted to shoot in Australia. He understood it was, to at least some degree, deal-driven; that to actually deliver a show as

“It was difficult establishing the production hierarchy in Australia. For them, writers are writers, producers are producers. It was interesting.”

—Writer/Producer O'Bannon—

ambitious as FARSCAPE we had to go outside of the U.S. He didn't want to make a huge decision like that just based solely financial reasons. I told him, and this was honest, 'For me, it's not just a financial reason.' The original STAR WARS was shot in London. Even though it has an American sensibility and an obviously American writer-director in

George Lucas, even though the key cast was American, there was still something that was kind of odd to it. It had an American sensibility, but all the supporting cast was British, the day-players were not familiar faces. Just in terms of the design of things, it lent it a sense of 'I'm not on really on Earth anymore.' I said, 'That is what we are looking for with this.'

"I said, 'We are going to have the Australians play what we call mid-Atlantic, which is not quite Australian. It's not quite English, it's not quite American, it's kind of somewhere in the middle.' That's what we eventually had the Australians doing. I said, 'Creatively, I like the notion of going to Australia because there is a pool of talent down there that hasn't been dipped into yet by America. There are a lot of locations. They have a lot of exotic landscapes that we can take advantage of.' Again, we thought this STAR WARS kind of thing, where you are actually someplace else and have an American actor dropped in the middle of somewhere where everybody else has accents, could really serve the show, and ulti-

Beyond the void: Thanks to the work of season one FX house GMD, FARSCAPE's universe offers a richer palate of colors than the stark black and white of other productions. Below: Moya, mid-Starburst -- a completely CG-generated sequence..



mately it really has. I think that has been a tremendous factor. Talk about an audacious place, an audacious, creative, crazy people. It's that."

Matt Carroll, an Australian producer of both television and feature films, helped bring FARScape to Australia. He recalled, "The Jim Henson Company approached me to look into the possibility of making FARScape in Australia. We find if we in Australia can reduce costs by 30%, then U.S. productions will move here. Obviously we can't replicate many U.S. locations like the Canadians, but sci-fi is very viable here. The other attraction is the quality of our VFX companies. Following THE MATRIX, we now have a very high level of VFX creation."

O'Bannon and Kemper went back and forth between Southern California and Australia throughout this time period. Said Kemper, "Rock and I made a trip to Sydney in January of '98, and we went back in May. Rock went on to London. I stayed in Sydney for two weeks without him, getting writers together and directors. He had started the process. We had gotten to the point where we were doing things separately, because you had to. Then we came back here and a couple of writers joined us—David Wilks and Sally Lapiduss. Then Ricky ultimately joined us, and we had freelancers come in. We were here, essentially, until about September, and then I went down to start prep. Rock came down for two weeks, and then he left. I was there, and Ricky and Rockne were in the States with Sally and David. I was the only one in Australia, and I had one assistant, Lily Taylor. They were doing rewriting and I was rewriting in Australia, and I was doing all the producing."

Recalled O'Bannon, "As praiseworthy as I am of Australia creatively, it was difficult early on to establish the production hierarchy. They have a very different system over there. Writers are not producers. Writers are writers, directors are directors, and producers are producers. The staff situation for writers is very different. They write three drafts of the script, and the script then gets shot. The directors come in and treat it all like their own, individual films."

"David and I come in, and we are writer/producers. We are producers, and expect to creatively run the show. We understand budget; we understand these things. It made it difficult in those early days, but that friction created interesting things, as it so often does. By us pushing in our direction and the Australian producers pushing in theirs, we found a really appropriate place.



To each his armament: D'Argo and Crichton leap into battle—different lifeforms finding a unified cause in the struggle to survive.

Matt Carroll was an amazing, important player, bringing elements of the show, the Australian directors and that sort of thing. We tried to bring Australian writers into the mix and get them to understand our style, how we want to keep honing to the very end. On the production side it's very difficult for the line producer to understand that changes will keep coming in. We're producers—we know not to change some gigantic set piece, but if we can make the dialogue better, you'll get changed pages with revised dialogue on it. That's not the end of the world."

Casting the show started with the lead, astronaut John Crichton. Recalled O'Bannon, "The intent was always to have an American in the lead. It's funny now to talk about it in hindsight, but in the early days there was the notion of having someone of some recognition value in the lead, someone who had been the lead in another series. I didn't resist it, but I also wasn't going to cast simply based on that criteria. We talked to some actors who had been in series before, but mostly we just read a lot of guys. Ben Browder came in and did it on tape for us, and we just kept going back to that tape; that was the one we kept putting back in the machine. We took him over to the network. It's such a subjective process: Everybody liked Ben a lot and liked his performance, but it's just that, 'I don't know. Is he enough of an astronaut?' I kept saying, 'I want him to have heroic good looks, but he has to have the chops of being a real guy. That is what we are selling, a guy from our time, anyone of our audience dropped in the mid-

continued on page 38

rage. Crichton, Aeryn, Zhaan, and Rygel find him on Sykar, a farm planet, where the warrior has uncharacteristically decided to live, working in the tannot root fields with the disconcertingly placid natives. With the leader Volmae (Angie Milliken) encouraging the visitors to remain, Rygel and Aeryn instead return to the ship to investigate what has made Rygel's bodily fluids explosive. Zhaan comes under the planet's influence, and it falls to John—who is forcibly "recruited" by the planet's resistance movement—to save D'Argo, Zhaan and himself.

Said Woods, "My introduction to the show was shooting 'Back And Back To The Future' and 'Thank God It's Friday' together, as one, even though they are completely unrelated episodes. That was really, really hard. They are two very, very different scripts. 'Back And Back To The Future,' I thought, was a really solid, beautiful twist on a time trick-sort of episode, whereas 'Thank God It's Friday,' as a script, had a slightly bumpier ride to its conclusion."

O'Bannon was pleased to see the growing relationship between Pilot and Aeryn, which began in this episode and continued into later episodes such as "DNA Mad Scientist." He said, "Aeryn is back on the ship with Rygel, and they are trying to figure out why his sweat is exploding and his urine is exploding. We knew Aeryn needed to do the science, and there is nobody there to help her do it. She starts talking to Pilot, and Pilot talks about how even though you think he knows how to do everything he does, he wasn't good at it either."

"In the beginning, I found you interesting... Yes, but only for a moment."

—Aeryn to Crichton

PK TECH GIRL

★★★1/2

Production #10107. Airdate 4/16/99. Written by Nan Hagan. Directed by Tony Tilse.

Moya comes upon the Zelbinion, a famous Peacekeeper ship lost for 100 cycles, now adrift in space, crew long dead. This is the very same ship where Rygel was first imprisoned and tortured by Durka (David Wheeler). Aeryn and John get on board, and find that the ship has already been stripped by the Sheyangs. They also find a technician, Gilina (Alyssa-Jane Cook), left behind by Captain Crais to try to get the ship going. She is very different from Aeryn, with different



The Sykar city towers above the "happy" field-hands; blissful servitude from "Thank God It's Friday. Again."

training, and she and John find themselves attracted to each other. When the Sheyangs return, D'Argo and Zhaan, aboard Moya, must outwit them, while Gilina, John, and Aeryn try to get the Zelbinion's defense grid operational. Complicating matters is the question of whether or not Gilina can be trusted.

Director Tony Tilse said, "It was my first experience with FARScape. I had a brief straight away from David that they wanted to take the

FARSCAPE

A Human Reaction

Crichton Discovers That Homecomings Aren't All They're Cracked Up To Be In This Dark Episode.

By Anna Kaplan

"A Human Reaction," Episode 16, was the second script that Justin Monjo wrote for FARSCAPE. It would be John Crichton's first return to Earth, or some semblance of the planet. Of course, it would all be an alien-induced experience, a version of Earth re-created from John's memories. But for the episode to work, the audience had to believe that Crichton might really be home.

David Kemper, early on, contributed key ideas that would sell the plot. Kemper described the discussions between the writers: "We were trying to make it that Crichton had come back, and he was skeptical of these Earthmen. We kept wrestling with the story—it always came back around that as soon as he doesn't believe he's not on Earth, then the audience doesn't believe, and they know he's not on Earth, anyway. I said, 'We got it wrong. He's got to convince them that he's Crichton. If this was real, the first thing that would happen if an astronaut disappeared and then came back would be, 'What the hell happened to you?'" That twisted the whole episode around and made it work.

"As we were first plotting it out, we only had Crichton going down. Then we said, 'We better bring someone else down. Let's bring Aeryn, for sure, so they can kiss, and let's bring down D'Argo, so he can yell at people.'

"I was thinking it over. I said, 'Let's bring down Rygel, because they've never seen Rygel.'

"They looked at me. 'What are they going to do with

Rygel?'

"I said, 'I think that the end of an act ought to be Rygel being autopsied, like 'Alien Autopsy.' We can make it work. We need to autopsy Rygel.'

"I called The Creature Shop and said, 'If we wanted to autopsy Rygel, could you do that?' Dave Elsey started screaming into the phone, 'We'd love to do that.' It was on speaker phone, and I looked at everybody,

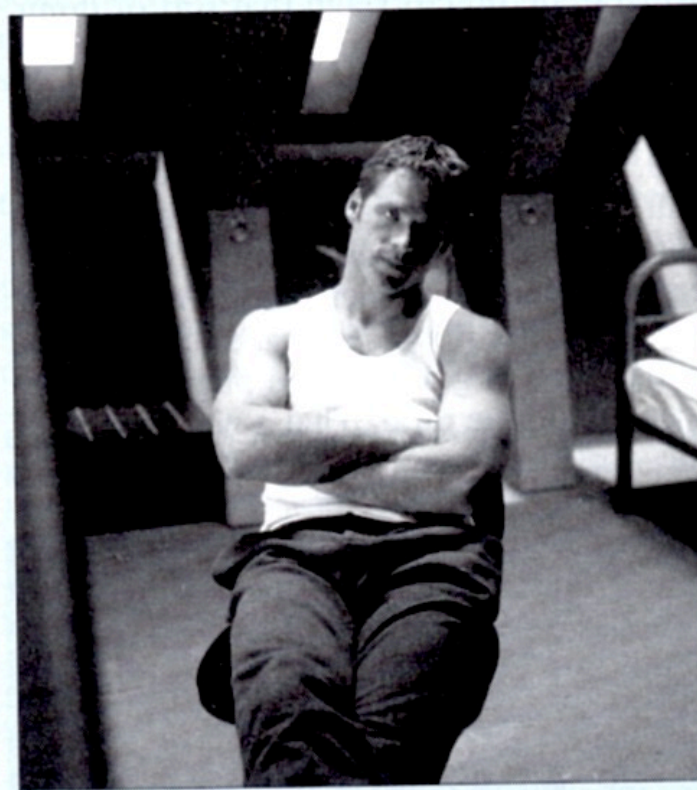
and
Rock
went,
'Let's
autopsy
Rygel.'"

Said Monjo, "In 'A Human Reaction,' the first thing you have to sell is that he really is on Earth. That is the

hardest thing to sell. I thought the thing in the script that really sold it is that the whole first act is the Earthlings not believing he's Crichton. The drama is not, 'Am I back on Earth?' It's 'No, I really am Crichton.'

"If the bad guys were doing a plot to get something from him, they would just say, 'Of course, you're right, you're John Crichton.' But they are not. They are saying, 'You're not John Crichton.' All of a sudden you trust who

should be the bad guys; all of a sudden, it's, 'Maybe he really is back on Earth.' Then, with Rygel getting cut open, you think, 'Wait a second. If Crichton really is back on Earth, these people really would have this reaction to a little, ugly, slug-thing. They wouldn't care if they killed it.' It all stems from that first decision: You have to sell that he was on Earth, and keep that for as long as you could.



YOU SHOULDN'T GO HOME AGAIN: Crichton is greeted with less-than-sunny conditions upon his return. Bleak weather on location only helped.

"The problem that you get into then is that the reveal in the fourth act is going to come like a big load of bricks. That's the trade off. All of a sudden the penny is going to drop really fast, perhaps too fast. But I think that's a fair trade off, because you've had the audience interested for a long time, thinking, 'Maybe this is Earth, and maybe they are going to do something else here.'"

Said director Rowan Woods, "'A Human Reaction' was very special to me. I was really interested in taking these characters back to Earth. That they'd be coming to Australia was a challenge for me, because it had to be

woven into the fabric of the story reasonably seamlessly for it to play. We even managed to get a few jokey references to 'Down Under' happening. It was special to me to shoot an offshore, sci-fi show in my home town, a show that actually justifies the real location in the backstory.

"It was such a glorious script. That script delivered the most gut-wrenching plot twists thus far in that season. To see Rygel suddenly laid out on the slabs—not just dead but dissected like a frog in biology class; that scene when Crichton's father comes and visits him in a quarantine cell and, being a military man and probably familiar with top-level security protocol, has to check that this is really his son. On top of everything else, all the nastiness that Crichton experiences before that in relation to being interrogated makes it a wonderfully rich, dark episode."

An unexpected complication arose when the normally sunny, Australian climate turned rainy. Said Woods, "What actually made it work for me was the fact that we had to think on our feet. We had rain where we were supposed to have sunshine, so all the references to gorgeous sunshine and babes on the beach, all of those clichés about Australian life that the writers were playing to in Crichton's return, were foiled because we were confronted by very bad weather when we were shooting. Ben and Justin Monjo and I had to flip all those references on their heads and actually make Earth a very cloudy, dark, rainy place, which I think worked out better for the show.

In a more uncompromising way, it reflected Crichton's head-space at the time, which was one of extreme disappointment that Earth was revealing itself to his alien friends as a dark and hostile place.

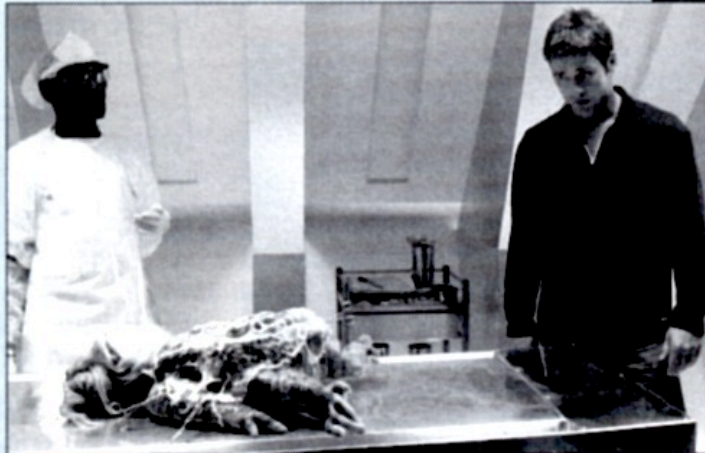
"In order to achieve that and make it work, make it sing as an episode, we had to change a whole lot of speeches on the spot. In fact, some of the most beautiful moments in the episode for me are those speeches that we had to turn on their heads, to spin around and play in reverse. Crichton and Aeryn in that apartment that his father set up for them, when they are on the bed, just before they kiss—there is a beautiful speech from Crichton looking out the window. It's really grey, and the bridge is in the background, and the rain is pouring down. That big speech was originally written for sunshine, with him counterpointing his disappointment. But instead, Crichton is staring out the window: Nothing has gone right; his fellow human beings have treated his alien friends appallingly; and the weather just played right into our hands. Ben's got a line at the end: 'Earth, minus the sunshine.' It's a beautiful, poetical moment."

Woods laughed. "That was rewritten on the spot, as was that whole gag when they are running through the rain. Just before they get in the door, it was literally pouring down rain. Aeryn tastes some, and she says, 'Rain, is this what you call it? I like it.' That stuff only works if you've got really smart actors who are really hooked into the script, who have the words to cope with different circumstances. Our actors are up to it. With Ben and Claudia there, and Justin Monjo on the phone, we'd do a conference call and come up with a completely different spin on a really key speech. At those moments, you either sink or you swim."

Recalled Claudia Black, "It was shot in Sydney, on location—it's supposed to be fantastic weather; I'm supposed to be running around in a dress. The weather was just disastrous. In the scene where we walk toward the house, and I taste the rain and say that I like it, that was just something that I asked Rowan if

I could do. He said, 'How would Aeryn respond to rain?' I said, 'I don't know. She may have seen it on other planets, or may not have. I'd rather take the angle which I think is more interesting and imaginative: That she is experiencing it for the first time, or at least experiencing with a different name.'"

Woods added, "The only sunshine we had was on our first day shooting, when Crichton first comes down and he is on the beach. That was fantas-



tic. When he first comes down he is full of optimism and it's blue skies and the surf is rolling in. It was just glorious with him falling on his back and saying, 'Hello sky. Hello sunshine.'

"Then every day after that was just gray and rainy. All the references to the gorgeous harbor and the babes on the beach, all that stuff, we just flipped it all around. When I showed my first cut to some of the producers, they couldn't believe it. They knew I'd had to shoot in rain and we'd have to change a few things. They were at least expecting some gorgeous girls and boys on the beach, because Sydney beaches are some of the best in the world. They were especially expecting gorgeous BAYWATCH scenes on the beach when Crichton and his father were there having that talk and looking over the beach."

Woods did find an ally in Justin Monjo. Said Woods, "Separate from Justin, there were obviously all sorts of expectations from other quarters that it would be sunny and beautiful and gorgeous and sexy. When it wasn't, when the weather wasn't doing it and we began to flip things around to make them work, I was really happy. In fact, when I shot that scene with Crichton and his father on the beach, I thought, I'm going to go all the way on



WE OPEN IN SYDNEY: The only way to make sure things are running okay is to check under the hood—no big deal for Crichton. Rygel's not so lucky.

this. The only person I am going to shoot unclad is going to be an elderly man, and he is going to be in his swimming costume and I'm going to shoot it in slo-mo. That to me was

a really strong, symbolic reference point to where our minds were at when we were making the episode."

An interesting issue arose for the scene where the Sebacean Aeryn spoke to John's father: Without translator microbes, what would Crichton the elder hear? Explained Monjo, "Rowan Woods is an expert on TV and science fiction; he loves that whole world. We were debating back and forth whether, when Aeryn speaks to him, it should be in alien language or English. We never had that moment before, never had to define how to play it. We finally decided it was going to sound like alien gobbeldy-gook to him. I forget what she says in the script—something like, 'Your son is a good man.' But Rowan wanted to add another level to the moment, a touch of ambiguity where you think, What is really going on? He had her give this really strange look between the two of them, and holds it a moment too long. You think, Is he an alien too? It puts in a moment of clouded ambiguity that wasn't in the script."

Added Black, "I had to speak Sebacean, so I just created something which sounds like, really, someone speaking backwards. I had originally arranged to record the English

of what the writers wanted me to say backwards—my intention was to have hidden messages for the fans as they played it back, but we didn't have enough time. I had, I think, one day to reverse the English, and I would have wasted everyone's time on set getting it right, so I just made it up."

An issue left open by the episode was whether Crichton and Aeryn actually slept together in that apartment. Said Monjo, "In every draft I wrote, they do. When we finished the episode, it was running long. We just cut the scene out where it unequivocally says they slept together. Now you have a warmth in some of the performances after that scene, but they no longer sleep together. That's the reality of the show. I've got to remember that they really haven't slept together, even though we shot it."

Black begged to differ with the writer: "That episode on Earth, Aeryn was there, and they definitely did do it. In Europe, we've done it, but not in America. The Europeans got the version where it runs slightly longer, because they have fewer commercials, or none. So they get the morning-after-the-night-before scene, where Aeryn is a little cantankerous and avoiding the subject. I think the DVDs will be released with the scenes that you have never seen. I feel sad for the fans in America—they don't get to see as much of the show, at least in Season One, as people in Europe see. But now, everyone gets delivered the same version." □

series off to a more adult bent: a bit darker; a bit more dynamic; and a bit more energy. That is what I really enjoy in my directing, that certain level of energy and certain level of dynamic. We tried to catch that mood of the ship in its previous incarnation and to get the idea that Rygel had been tortured, to instill an essence of what it was like for Rygel.

"It was interesting to bring Gilina in, because it was a way to explore the Crichton-Aeryn relationship, to emphasize their feelings for each other and bring them back up to the surface. Gilina was a great way to do that, as a character. To bring her in and have Crichton try to protect her really heightened that relationship between Crichton and Aeryn."

Claudia Black said, "'PK Tech Girl' was the first opportunity for Aeryn—and me as an actor as well—to really earn her stripes. I think they weren't sure about how I was placing Aeryn. I think they were a bit concerned, and I think they were considering bringing in some more cast members because they didn't know how to balance Aeryn out with Crichton."

The Sheyangs would appear again in Season Two. Gilina returned in "Nerve" and "The Hidden Memory," while the thought-to-be-long-dead Durka returned in "Durka Returns."

"Before I became a priest, I was a savage. I thought I'd eradicated it forever. Now I have to rid myself of it again, and I don't know if I can do it, John."
—Zhaan

THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC ★★★

Production #10108. Airdate 6/11/99. Written by Richard Manning. Directed by Brendan Maher.

Zhaan, D'Argo, Crichton and Aeryn take a transport down to a planet to look for supplies. There, Crichton is lured into the lair of an evil sorcerer named Maldis (Chris Heywood), who feeds off hate and evil. While Crichton's body lies in a coma, his spirit is brought into Maldis' world, where the sorcerer hopes to pit him against the spirit of Crais—who is now ignoring Peacekeeper directives in order to continue his obsessive pursuit of Crichton. When Zhaan and the others find John's body, they learn from Liko (Grant Bowler) that the only way to stop Maldis and free John is for Zhaan to unite with the human and unleash her dark energies, something which she decides she must do.

Manning said, "One notion that had always been in David's head for the Maldis character was that he should speak entirely in iambic pentameter. I jumped at the idea, but decided it'd get tedious over an entire script. Besides, part of the fun of Maldis was that he knew what was inside Crichton's mind and could therefore speak using Crichton's Earth idiosyncrasies and pop-culture slang. I compromised by writing Haloth, Maldis' previous, dotty-old-wizard incarnation, in iambic

The sorcerer Maldis toys with Crichton, a prisoner in a dangerous fantasy world, from "That Old Black Magic."



dle of STAR WARS.' If he's too much of jut-jawed hero, it doesn't work, which was good, because it played into what Stephen Chao wanted. David and I sat with Stephen Chao and said, 'This is the guy we want.' Steven said, 'Okay, if this is who you want, this will be our guy.' Ben is forever beholden to us because we went back and said 'This is the man we want.'"

There was a brief time when the producers considered casting an American as Aeryn Sun. Said O'Bannon, "There were people we saw here in the States for Aeryn. Sci-Fi Channel wanted an attractive woman, so there were really solid actresses, but they were also kind of model/actresses.



Pale seductress: The sensuous leader Volmae (Angie Milliken) offered a different view of alien sexuality and manipulation early in FARSCAPE's run.

It's amazing some of the people that we looked at relative to the strong actors we finally got, and how the chemistry worked. There were a couple of odd choices to play D'Argo, but once these people came in and we saw them, it was like it couldn't be anybody else. The chemistry between them is fantastic."

Working with casting director Maura Fay in Australia, O'Bannon and Kemper, in collaboration with producer Matt Carroll, supervised the process of picking the rest of the cast. Before going off to work on PITCH BLACK, Australian Claudia Black put some Aeryn lines on tape at the request of the casting director. Said O'Bannon, "We saw her only on tape. We had a little bit of her doing lines, but it wasn't even up on her feet, she was just sitting there. That was followed by some stuff that Matt Carroll had culled together from other shows she had been in. I remember a shot of her running down an alley with a short skirt and a gun

or something—a wonderful, sexy sort of thing. She was hard to find, but once we saw her, she was the obvious choice.

"With Virginia [Hey - Zhaan] and Anthony [Simcoe—D'Argo], we saw a lot of people on tape. Then I went down to Australia. We had one day when we had three or four Zhaans and three or four D'Argos in a rehearsal hall. We videotaped them, and we just did typical mix-and-match. We had a couple of sides that we had written specifically for this.

"By design all the characters, in a certain way, at first blush are kind of recognizable icons from other shows or movies. People don't really see that so much now because it has spun beyond that, but early on they would get after me and say, 'It's a Klingon, it's Obi-Wan Kenobi,' that sort of thing. That was by design. The core of our idea is that one of us is dropped into the middle of STAR TREK or STAR WARS, so for the joke to work in the premiere episode it really had to be kind of WIZARD OF OZ. I wanted the big, brutish warrior, and I wanted the peacenik priest, and the kind of fussy little king, even though, even in the premiere episode, it broke away from those icons rather quickly.

"We had this preamble conversation with [our auditioners] all in a room, and everyone would come in and be exactly what the icon was, exactly the straightforward one. The first of the two that we auditioned, in this configuration, was Virginia. She had so much fun, she was Zhaan. D'Argo was eating something, and she would laugh and smile. I so admire her, because it's bold, because you would expect someone to do the other. She has this big, full-throated laugh, and just absolutely embraced it. I don't know if she actually took what I said to heart, or she just said, 'I'm going to be what I am. I am a very spiritual person, but I am not a repressed spiritual person. I embrace things.' She was absolutely dead on.

"Then Anthony, a very trained actor, came in and did D'Argo. At first he did it with a very deep voice, and I went up and said, 'Obviously it can't be your regular voice, but put it somewhere in the middle. You don't have to go way down here.' He did it, and by lifting the voice up, it changed the performance, it lightened the performance to a degree. By the time we put the two of them together, I was in the other room looking at them through the glass with Matt Carroll. I turned to Matt and I said, 'If we had a 35 millimeter camera here we could start shooting the show,' because these were the two. There was no doubt about it.

"The advantage we had because we were casting character roles other than Crichton from Australia was that there was no issue with the network here in the States with name value. They knew we were casting in



In the belly of the ship: The decorative, organic forms of Moya's appointments form a potent contrast against our own notions of advanced technology.

Australia, and they weren't expecting to get Russell Crowe. It's one of those things where it all kind of magically fits together. The true magic of it is that there wasn't a lemon in the crate, there wasn't a situation where it's, 'We've got to get rid of that person or that character. They all worked. The planets lined up in this one instance. It doesn't happen very often. It just worked really well.'

With cast on board, and crew assembling (see sidebars), it was time to make season one of FARSCAPE.

THE PILOT: EVERYDAY HEROICS

Rockne S. O'Bannon first wrote the pilot episode for what would become FARSCAPE many years ago. When it actually came time to film the episode, the original script needed some reworking. "It was mostly cutting," O'Bannon recalled. "The pilot script that everybody fell in love with and that sold the series, was, I believe, 67 pages long. Our scripts tend to be around 52 to 54 pages. A lot of it was just cutting out a third of the script. I also took to heart Stephen Chao's, the president of the Sci-Fi Channel, edict to make

the aliens as alien as possible and make the whole show as weird and off beat and unusual as possible. I added a lot of edge, as much edge as I am capable of, among the characters, between the characters. In terms of actual brute work, it was mostly just try-

But he's a master at Gin Rummy: Tavleks are hyper-aggressive, power-boostered extortionists who make their living out of kidnapping and ransoming rich victims. And as our friend below demonstrates, they're not going to be winning Miss America anytime soon, either.



pentameter. We considered using a location for Maldis's realm, but our mad-genius art director Ricky Eyres built us some magical sets instead—complete with a gigantic fire pit."

Said director of photography, Craig Barden, "Production designer Ricky Eyres provided me with a fantastic opportunity with the Maldis set. It looked like a giant chess board with interchangeable set pieces that could be shuffled around to create new areas. We complemented this effect by coloring the new areas with various lighting gels. The flame set was great too, in its own right. We had flame bars in the center of the set, which provided basic illumination of the actors and the set. The flames were added later in post."

Maldis returned from his dispersal in Season Two.

"I was born a Peacekeeper soldier. I've always been one among many—a member of a division, a platoon, a unit, a team. I've never been on my own, John. Never been alone. Ever."

—Aeryn.

DNA MAD SCIENTIST

★★★★

Production #10109. Airdate 6/18/99. Written by Tom Blomquist. Directed by Andrew Prowse.

The group seek out a genetic scientist named Namtar (movement by Adrian Getley, voice by Julian Garner), who says he can provide them with star charts to their home worlds. As it turns out, Namtar cannot help John—humans are too alien—while Aeryn, having abandoned her Peacekeeper training, cannot go home. But Rygel, D'Argo and Zhaan will do anything for the tantalizing star charts, including fulfilling Namtar's required payment: One of Pilot's arms. Crichton and Aeryn are horrified at their companions' behavior, and are



The scientist Namtar uses the desires of Moya's crew against them, to disastrous results in "DNA Mad Scientist."

further disconcerted when the group begins battling over the crystal containing the bartered information, which, it turns out, Moya can only use to reach one world. Frightened at the thought of being left alone, Aeryn decides to see if Namtar can help her find a peaceful Sebacean settlement. Instead, Namtar injects her with Pilot's DNA, and she starts to metamorphose into another species. John, working together with Namtar's "assistant" Kornata (Sarah Burns) and Pilot, tries to save Aeryn.

This episode marked a major change in FARSCAPE. Many fans were horrified when Pilot's arm was lopped off and could hardly believe that Zhaan helped. O'Bannon worked on the script, and understood how significantly the series was being altered: "We know that pissed a lot of people off, but it was interesting to watch the arc of the reactions. At first people were like, 'How dare they?' They had their 'I'm watching a television series' hat on. Then things started to sink in and they started to realize, with these characters, in these circumstances, it really is correct."

Said director Andrew Prowse, "In a way, 'DNA Mad Scientist' is where a whole lot of the components of the show came together. We started making things that were not so much adventures in space but had a deeper resonance. I really like that episode. If you look at it, it's incredibly Gothic and dark and scary. But it was an episode where we headed off in another direction completely. The script was fantastic. We just pushed it. You just keep pushing things as far as you can push them with the time and the money, and you finish up with interesting results."

"Moya, we would never hurt you or your baby. We're happy that you're having a child. But do we have to die so that your baby can live?"

—John Crichton

THEY'VE GOT A SECRET ★★★

Production #10110. Airdate 6/25/99. Written by Sally Lapiduss. Directed by Ian Watson.

While doing some routine maintenance work, D'Argo slides down a long tunnel, finds Peacekeeper technology, and in a panic to get free, kicks out some of Moya's panels and is ejected into space. It turns out Luxans can live for a short time in space—after Aeryn retrieves D'Argo, he is disoriented and hallucinating, believing everyone to be someone from his past. As he interacts with the others, the true story of his imprisonment—and his search for his son, Jothee—comes out. While the crew deals with D'Argo, they must also figure out what is happening to Moya, who has started to shut down life support and other systems as Pilot becomes unconscious. When John goes down the maintenance shaft, he finds the answer: Moya is now pregnant.

This episode established many important details of D'Argo's backstory, of Moya's potential, and of the DRD's (Diagnostic Repair Drones) functions. Said director Ian Watson, "It's the moment of conception for baby Moya. It was a good example for how an episode can create a mythology for the series. We get the Jothee backstory, which then returns in Series Two. And it was the first time we had a good look at the DRD's."

"It was a strong emotional story, and my first episode in the series. I really treasured the chance to work with Anthony, because I think he's a fabulous actor. He hadn't, until then, had a strong emotional journey where we could learn more about him, so the real joy of the episode for me was just working with a strong emotional through-line and working with Anthony."

"Officer Aeryn Sun, you have committed numerous acts of treason. Abandon the human criminal, return the Leviathan, surrender Ka D'Argo, Pa'u Zotoh Zhaan and Dominar Rygel XVI. Comply, and you will retire honorably with your commission fully restored."

—Captain Crais.

'TILL THE BLOOD RUNS CLEAR ★★★

Production #10111. Airdate 7/9/99. Written by Doug Heyes, Jr. Directed by Tony Tilse.

Aeryn and John, in the Farscape module, attempt to reproduce a wormhole near a planet experiencing severe solar flares. An unstable wormhole opens, but Aeryn and John have to pull out, and set the damaged ship down on the planet for repairs. There, a mechanic named Furlow (Magda Szubanski) will repair the ship for a price. Crais has sent beacons to this planet, broadcasting the descriptions of Rygel, Zhaan, and D'Argo. Two blood trackers, Rorf (Jeremy Sims) and Rorg (Jo Kerrigan) think they can capture this bounty, but Aeryn and John try to keep them off the scent.

Director Tony Tilse recalled, "That episode was great because we went away for a location shoot. There is a place north of Sydney, a three hour drive north of where we are here—sand dunes that go on forever. Our designer, Ricky



Masters of the bad touch: Let the bad guys of other series seek power and wealth, FARSCAPE's nemeses are in it for personal reasons. Above: Crais and Aeryn renew acquaintances. Right: Scorpius turns on the charm.

ing to trim it down from the 67 pages it was originally. That was probably the hardest thing to do.

"A lot of it was just verbiage. In creating a pilot script for a show like this, there is so much description that is necessary. You can't just say, 'It's an inner city high school,' and leave it at that. You really have to describe a lot. The more meetings that I would have, the more that I would talk to the different departments, the more opportunity I had to talk to director Andrew Prowse, the more descriptive verbiage I could cut out. It's amazing how that just helps just bring down the page count."

There was, in addition, a conceptual change to the series' core concept. Said O'Bannon, "Originally the ship was supposed to be a prison ship holding hundreds of different prisoners and hundreds of different species. The intent was to be able to place episodes on the ship and have us meet new escaped prisoners that we may not have seen the week before. Once we sold the series, and the cold light of day of day hit us, we realized that this would be outrageously expensive and difficult to do. We pared it down to the key cast, and that notion of being able to walk down the passageways and have other prisoner-aliens passing us—that sort of thing—got jettisoned."

But if the scope of the series was being tightened, O'Bannon also saw fit to add something that would add dimension to all that followed. He recalled, "The father wasn't in the script, originally. I added that bit at the beginning. At one point I was thinking, should it be a sister? I was trying to think of whom I wanted to key on. I keyed

on the father and the fact that the father was himself an astronaut, and a hero in a very traditional sense—that gave me the core of the series that would resonate. Here was John, whom I knew would be on this very unexpected, heroic adventure a few minutes into the premiere episode, and from then on. Now every episode I watch, and no matter what we throw at John—and we are really throwing the kitchen sink at this poor guy every week—to me it always resonates back to that theme with the father, that notion of heroics, that fact that you really do need to prepare to be a hero. If there is a burning building, everyone hopes that they will rise to the occasion and run into the building. That's very obvious and traditional heroics. But there are day-to-day heroics that aren't the opportunity to run into the burning building that I think we all need to be prepared for. That was what I wanted John's father to say to him. Ben played that opening incredibly well. A young man doesn't understand what the older man, the father, is saying to him. He doesn't get it. He doesn't understand the perspective that the father is speaking from. But I think as the series has gone on that John is maturing into that. I long for the day when he does get to reunite with his father and acknowledge that moment."

Sci-Fi Channel viewers got their first look at FARSCAPE on March 19, 1999, when Rockne S. O'Bannon's original pilot, "Premiere," aired. What viewers witnessed was O'Bannon's concepts beautifully translated to the screen. An astronaut from our time, John Crichton, finds himself lost on the other side of the universe. We are John

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Eyres built a set up there. It was nice to get outside, and have a wider palette, I guess, in which to paint.

"The Furlow character was originally written for a male. I had always admired Magda's work, and I thought, Wouldn't it be fantastic if it was a female character, or a female playing the part? She loved the idea that it was written for a male. We just got her in, made a few concessions to the sex change, and she went with it fantastically. I thought, She brought a quirkier edge to it, and that was great."

Magda Szubanski is probably best known outside of Australia for her role in the *BABE* movies. The dog-like blood trackers would be seen again in Season Two.

"Oh my, what is that?" —John

"Unity." —Zhaan

"Like Disney on acid; ten years of really great sex; all at the same moment." —John

RHAPSODY IN BLUE ★★1/2

Production #10112. Airdate 7/23/99. Teleplay by David Kemper. Story by Ro Hume and David Kemper. Directed by Andrew Prowse.

Moya has traveled to a planet where some Delvians have built a new temple. They are gradually going mad as they try to use their powers, and the leader Tahleen (Kate Raison) seeks Zhaan's help. Tahleen and her followers play tricks with the minds of John, Aeryn, Rygel, and D'Argo, distracting the crew from what is



Zhaan achieves unity, a cleric putting her own soul at risk, from "Rhapsody in Blue."

going on. John does learn that Zhaan killed the leader of her planet after he betrayed them to the Peacekeepers, and that was why she was imprisoned. When Zhaan agrees to join in unity with Tahleen, Tahleen takes all of her control—her very soul. Zhaan's dark side is now free, and she tells John she will lose her mind. John must join in unity with Zhaan to help her regain control.

Said Prowse, "David Kemper and I laugh about 'Rhapsody in Blue.' We put it all together in a hurry, and it sort of felt weird while I was shooting it. Then I looked at the rough cut and got to the end, and I was strangely moved. I surprised the hell out of myself. There are lovely things in it. I loved the ending of it, when Zhaan walks out on Crichton and tells him that she had one of the great experiences of her life. I can't remember the exact words, but just that idea of her taking responsibility for her actions—she becomes saintly again at the end of this episode where nasty things have happened."

Prowse noted that Virginia Hey "put a massive amount of work into it. That's why the episode works, because of the intensity of her performance." Hey now laughs about the episode, especially since all the other Delvian women have hair, and the men are bald.

FARSCAPE

Virginia Hey

The Popular Actress Brings a Believable Depth to Moya's Resident Mystic.

By Anna Kaplan

Tall, beautiful Virginia Hey found the role of a lifetime playing Pa'u Zotoh Zhaan on *FARSCAPE*. "I had no idea what she was like," the actress said of her initial auditions. "Because [TV] moves so quick, they usually don't have the first script or the first episode completed when they go into the audition process. They have it mapped out in their minds, but there's no specific script—you get one or two pages of audition piece. The only thing I knew was that she was statuesque, strong, spiritual. She was a priest, and an alien from the Delvian race, a highly spiritual race—that's it.

"I got the piece, I think, the day before. In those days the character was called Zenn, which was kind of nice. I thought, I don't know anything about this Delvian priest, but I do know her name is Zenn. Zen is Eastern, so I won't look into 'Western' religion. I'll look toward Eastern religion.

"All my spiritual philosophies are based on Eastern religious beliefs. I remembered meeting very spiritual people in my life, and in my mind I tried to compare the difference between, say, a Roman Catholic priest, a rabbi, someone who is a Buddhist, and someone who meditates a lot and who is quite progressive in self-awareness. What do they have in common? They have a certain serenity most people don't have. The Buddhist monk and the person into Eastern philosophies have more of a calmness than the other two, because their religion is heavily

based on a meditative process. All I could do was attack the audition piece with a sense of calm, no matter what. It was quite a fiery piece—the challenge was to be fiery and spirited and have a strong direction, but at the same time keep serenity and peacefulness, so that I did not get caught up in the stress of the situation. I also tried to keep my face as still as possible, because I tend to be very animated—I'm like this Labrador puppy about to explode all the time."

Rockne S. O'Bannon liked both the calm and the energy he saw in Hey. Even so, it was a long journey before the character viewers would finally recognize as Zhaan began to appear. Said Hey, "If you watch the first few episodes of *FARSCAPE*, you can see I started off very still and rigid. The first few directors said to me, 'We don't want you to buy into human emotion in the way you react. It doesn't matter what's going on around you—always be calm.' That was hard to do. My natural instinct, especially as an actor, is to give myself to the other actors. You bounce off each other instinctively: If

they are giving you something, you want to respond. I couldn't, because that's too human. The more we went on with the episodes, though, the more I interacted. Zhaan is now really different from the original. She involves herself more, whereas in



SERENE ASSASSIN: The clouded past of Pa'u Zotoh Zhaan adds an extra dimension to Virginia Hey's portrayal.



the beginning I was more still."

Season One of *FARSCAPE* was as much a spiritual, physical and emotional odyssey for Zhaan as for the human protagonist, John Crichton. Said Hey, "The wonderful thing about Zhaan is that she is the most complicated character of all. She not only has the day-to-day complications that everyone else has—desperately trying to get home—but she also has this duality. She's a priest, but she's fighting with her dark side all the time.

"I am really lucky, because there wouldn't be another character in the world, I think, that would have that kind of complexity—it doesn't exist, not in human form. It's a fantastic opportunity and a real learning curve for me as an actor, playing these complexities in such depth. When I first got to know Zhaan, she was a very serene priestess. She was almost the mother figure—the central figure pulling everybody together. I don't think any of us really knew where she was going at the beginning. She just developed."

In Season Two, Zhaan continued to evolve. The first episode filmed, "Dream A Little Dream" (which actually aired later in the season), saw Zhaan losing her mind and getting into trouble on a strange alien planet called Litigara. It was a difficult episode for Hey: "It was very hard, because Zhaan had to go crazy. It's really hard to play crazy, because you think that you are overdoing it. I surprised myself—a lot of the

time I thought, I am overacting this craziness. Then when I saw it played back, bits of it when we were doing ADR, it was subtle. I thought I was overacting all over the place; I thought I was giving away too much of the intensity. It didn't read like that on-screen. But you are still scared to push it too far—it's a real learning curve.

"All you can do is feel the emotion that you think you would be feeling. You put yourself in that situation: What's in-

sane? Do you lose your touch with reality completely? Do you keep a thread of it? Are you in reality most of the time but you're just skimming the surface of delusion? How do you do it? Because it's TV, you don't have rehearsal times, and it's hard to know how much to give. That was the problem for me with that one, and it was exhausting."

As season two progressed, Zhaan regained her sanity and began pursuing the Delvian Seek, while still acknowledging that the others needed her to remain in this plane of existence. She also bonded more strongly with the sentient starship Moya. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the "Look At The Princess" trilogy, where Moya's deity demanded that the ship die for having given birth to the gunship Talyn. About her scenes with the dying Pilot, Hey said, "When you see me crying, that's real—my heart is breaking. I just threw myself into it. With other productions, if I have to cry and I can't quite get it together by thinking about what I am doing, then I use something else, like thinking about my mum passing away, which she did twelve years ago. I haven't had to do that ever with FARSCAPE. The scripts are so extraordinarily brilliant that I just throw myself into the moment."

"I was doing ADR dubbing just before I came over here to the States, and I was doing the scenes with Pilot when I was saying goodbye to him. Oh my God, I was crying during the dubbing. I love Pilot. I think if Pilot could be mobile, if he could move around, I think Zhaan and he would have a wonderful love affair. If you think about it, he is the closest to Zhaan's personality: He's very logical and gentle. Despite Zhaan's dark side, she's primarily gentle, spiritual, logical, scientific, and incredibly wise. They are very similar in many ways."

The whole experience brought Zhaan closer to Moya. In fact, the deity charged her with taking good care of the ship. Said Hey, "It's a big responsibility for Zhaan. I used to ask the writers all the time, 'What is motivating Zhaan? What is her main priority? Is it to get home? Is it to move through the Delvian Seek and expand her

knowledge? Does she feel a responsibility for the crew and Moya, like a mother? What is it?' Now of course, her main priority is to look after Moya."

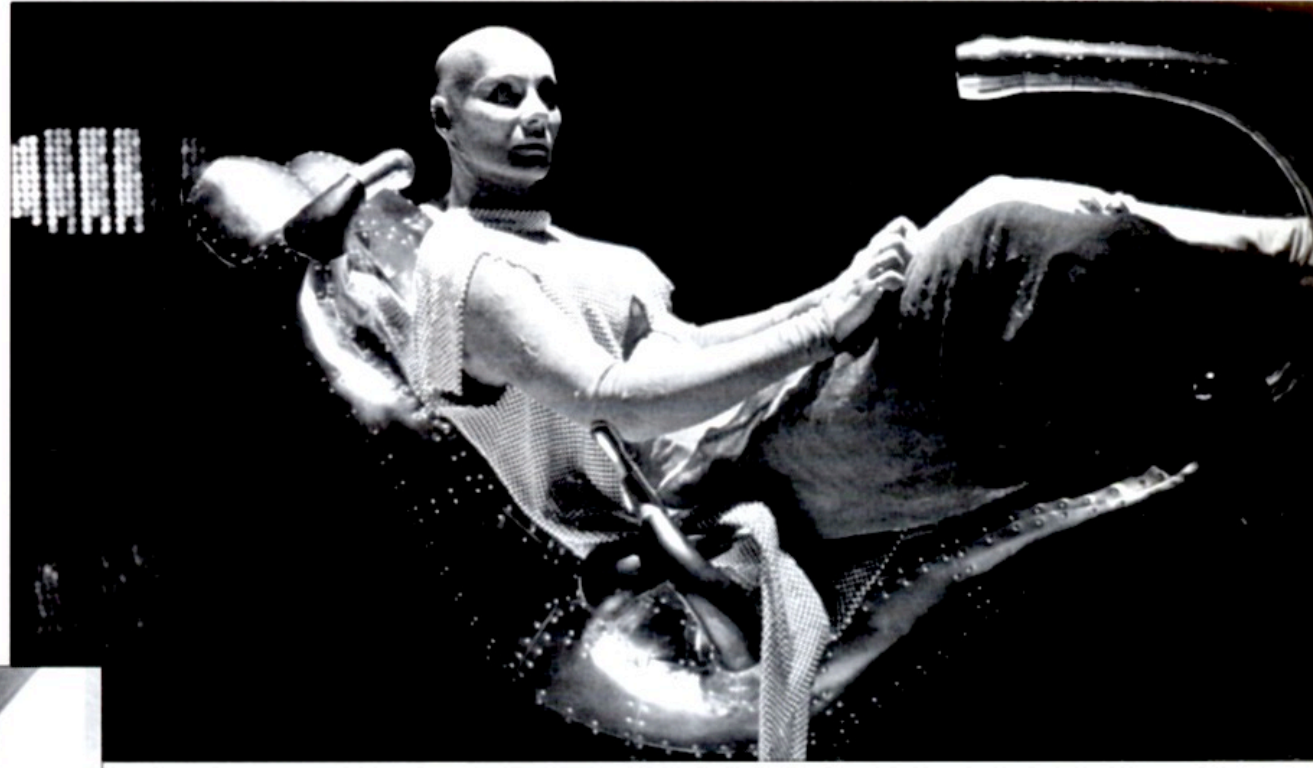
Hey may be the best-known Australian in the FARSCAPE cast. Recognized by American audiences as Warrior Woman from MAD MAX 2: THE ROAD WARRIOR (1981), she also appeared in the James Bond film THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS (1987), amongst others. Her American television credits include MISSION IMPOSSIBLE, FLIPPER, and ROAR. She said, "People recognize me already, because I



started in the business in 1971. I did my first television commercial for Seven-Up. From there, I went into modeling, and did about 56 television commercials. I then went into acting in 1982. I've done an awful lot of work, albeit very commercial work—lots of soap operas. I guess I have a familiar face, particularly in Australia and in England. I suppose you'd have to jog people's memories in America, but once they were prompted, I guess they would go, 'Oh yes, her.' I'm recognized all the time here, anyway. It's kind of different with this show, because obviously I am blue and bald. I haven't had any direct scrutiny yet."

Hey anxiously awaited FARSCAPE's debut in Australia, so that her contemporaries would understand what she was working on. When the show finally aired, well into the second year of production, Australians were treated only to the first half-dozen episodes. It was then taken off the air, and later revived against the Sydney Olympics. Laughed Hey, "It's been extraordinary, working on a show that we can't see—you feel like you are in a void. I think Claudia refers to it as existing in

a vacuum. It is rather peculiar—there is so much excitement associated with FARSCAPE everywhere else in the world, and you don't get a chance to experience it in the same way. We



EXPLICIT SECTS: FARSCAPE viewers have come to admire Zhaan's poise in extreme situations, whether it's undergoing interrogation (above), or achieving unity with a human (left).

toddle off to work every morning, and come back from work at night, and nobody knows what we are doing. Friends would say, 'How come you are having a day off today?' I'd answer, 'The others are on another planet, and I'm in the space ship at the moment.' For me, it's completely normal: The others are down on a planet, and I'm in Moya by myself with Rygel the Hynerian. They'd just look at me as though I was completely insane. I think once the show comes out, people will have more of an idea what we do. At the moment, family and friends just think I am nuts."

"I guess this is like being a big kid playing with toys, and if you don't have any playmates to play with, it's rather sad. That's why it's so much fun playing with the sci-fi fans from America and from England. We often get together on the Internet and have lots of fun. That's the part that I absolutely love. The more invasive scrutiny I am not so crazy about. My goal has never been to gain attention, or to be adored, or to be noticed. I just love the industry, and I love the whole artistic process of acting. In many ways the down-side often is being recognized, because then you don't have much of a life to yourself—you are always being examined. But for me, being in this

void of not being scrutinized has been rather nice, actually."

After production finished on season two, Hey let her hair grow, and appeared with very short, brown hair at the first

FARSCAPE convention. She laughed, "This is the first time in my life I've ever had really short hair. I've had long hair, like, always; I've had it my entire life, except when I was a little baby. This is a very new experience for me. It's great, experimenting with a different look."

Even the short hair was a welcome change after Zhaan: "Having no eyebrows and no hair, you can't hide—you can't hide anything. It's not like you can reshape your eyebrows to change the shape of your eyes, or pull your hair down to cover a face that is too long, or wear a fringe to cover a forehead. You are absolutely naked, bare. It's pretty intimidating at times, but you just have to give into it, go with it."

Speculating on where Zhaan might be headed in FARSCAPE's future, Hey said, "She can't go home, because she is a political prisoner, a political activist. She killed. She killed the ruler to try and free her people—she was a political assassin. She can't go back because there is an evil dictator still in charge. That's the thing: Her main priority is to go home, but she can't."

"She is the only Delvian who is capable of violence without dying or going insane—maybe in the future she'll find a way to save her planet." □

“Teaching Crichton takes time, D’Argo.”

—Zhaan

“Teaching Crichton is a waste of time.”

—D’Argo

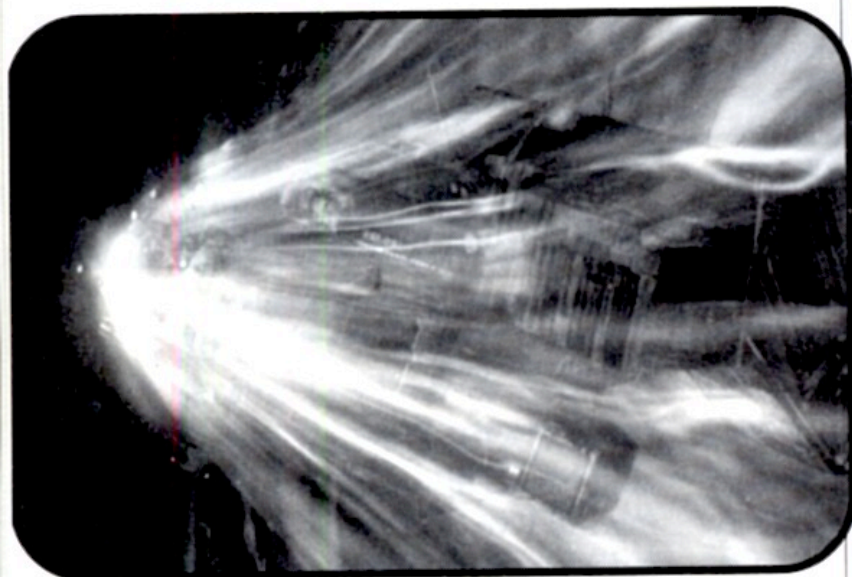
THE FLAX

★★1/2

Production # 10113. Airdate 7/16/99. Written by Justin Monjo. Directed by Peter Andrikidis.

Aeryn is trying to teach John how to pilot a transport module when something stops them dead in space. A garbologist named Stanz (Rhys Muldoon) boards Moya, warning the about the Flax, a net made by Zenetan pirates to stop ships. He and D’Argo go out in Stanz’s ship to reach John and Aeryn, but real Zenetan pirates board Moya, looking for Stanz. Meanwhile, John and Aeryn are trapped, and come to believe they are facing death.

This was Justin Monjo’s first script for FARSCAPE. He laughed about pitching the story to David Kemper, saying, “Moya is this living ship. They were describing her at that stage as



“The Flax” in operation; outer-space piracy that threatens Moya’s crew.

this big, huge living ship, which is biomechanical. It reminded me of a whale, basically. I just had one sentence: I said, ‘What about those deep-sea Japanese, rogue fishermen who have these drift nets that are ten miles long, that pick up anything that comes along. What about that for space?’ I was in a restaurant with David Kemper and I gave him that one sentence, and then he proceeded to talk for like an hour and a half. At the end of the hour and a half he looked at me and said, ‘That was a great pitch.’ That was how I started on FARSCAPE. Then I went away and wrote the script, and that became ‘The Flax.’”

The Zenetan pirates return in Season Two.

“I’m sick of it, Aeryn. I’m sick of Napoleon XIV, I’m sick of Blue, I’m sick of Tentacle Boy. And guess what? I’m sick of you.”

— John Crichton.

JEREMIAH CRICHTON

★★1/2

Production #10114. Airdate 7/30/99. Written by Doug Heyes, Jr. Directed by Ian Watson.

John Crichton is tired of being surrounded by aliens. He goes off Moya in his module. Moya, building up on backwash fluid, is forced to Starburst. John believes he has been left alone.

Months later, D’Argo and Rygel find John living with the inhabitants of the Earth-like planet Acquara. He has grown a beard and made his home on a world where nothing mechanical works. But it is not really paradise. When Rygel arrives, things get more complicated.

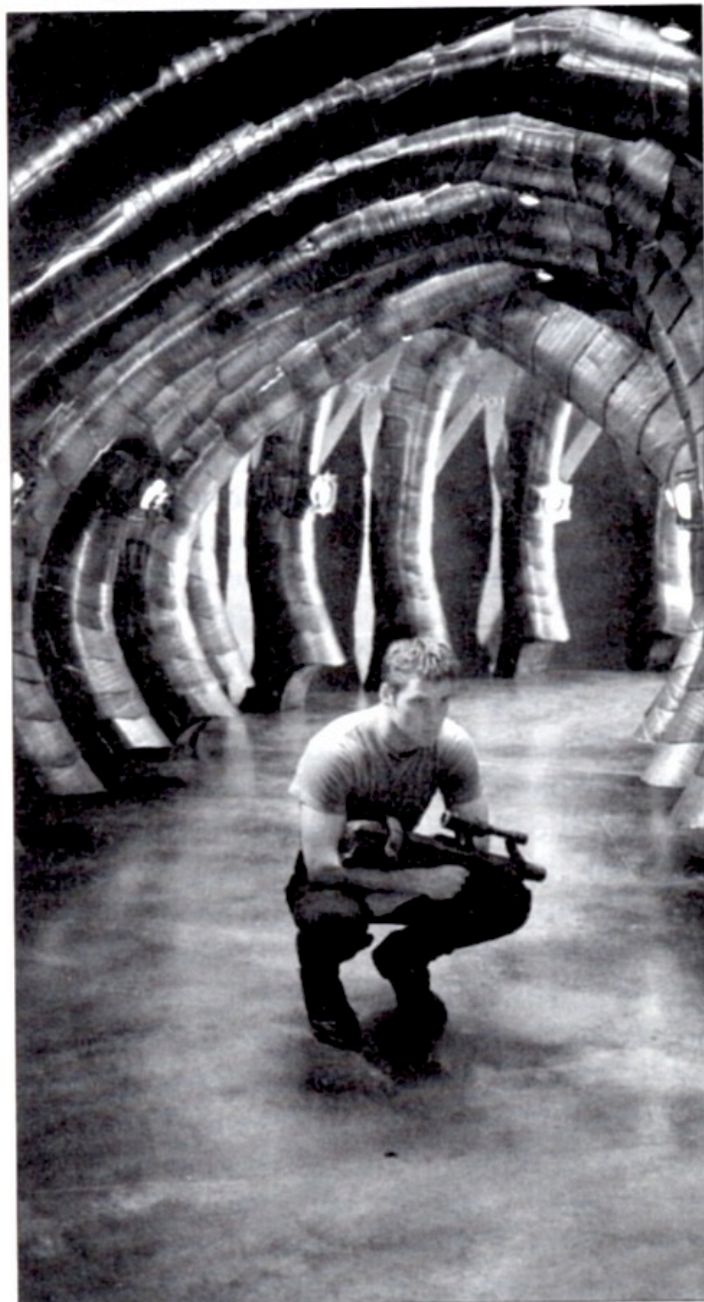
David Kemper got the idea from this story when he heard that JEREMIAH JOHNSON was Ben Browder’s favorite movie. He recalled, “The minute I heard JEREMIAH JOHNSON, I had the idea in my head in an instant for ‘Jeremiah Crichton.’”

Crichton—or he is us—seeing the alien landscape through his eyes. Said O’ Bannon, “There was so much going on just in terms of getting Crichton into that other place and getting us to understand it, and getting him to a place where at the end of the show he was, if not comfortable with the world, certainly bivouacked there. I am amazed at how well it accomplishes all the things it needs to accomplish.”

THE FIRST SEASON: HOME IS WHERE YOU HANG YOUR CRASH HELMET

Director Andrew Prowse, who directed the FARSCAPE pilot, “Premiere,” was sanguine about what he had accomplished with that first episode: “When you do a premiere, often the show hasn’t settled down. Nobody really quite knows what the show is. This show is more organic than most in a lot of ways, so the first half of the first series was sorting out what kind of a show we were making, how we were going to make it, and how all the components fit in together. From that point of view, I was quite happy looking at the premiere.”

Body in body: Below: Crichton pauses in one of Moya’s grand, arching corridors. Biology as high-tech.



“Nobody knew what the show was. The first half of the first season, we were sorting out what we were making, and how we were going to make it.”

—Director Andrew Prowse—

and how to make it. FARSCAPE’s first season was produced by The Jim Henson Company for the Sci-Fi Channel, in association with Australia’s Nine Network and Hallmark Entertainment. Executive producers as the season began were Rockne S. O’ Bannon, Brian Henson, Kris Noble and Robert Halmi, Jr. By episode nine, David Kemper was promoted from co-executive producer to executive producer. Other key people included Australian producer Matt Carroll, and Henson’s executive-in-charge-of-production, Pete Coogan. Said Kemper, “Rock was there in the beginning, but ultimately, Matt, Pete and I roomed there, everyday. There is no FARSCAPE without Pete Coogan and Matt Carroll. What Matt brought was the local talent—he put the show together. Pete made it happen, the financing and then overseeing it.”

O’ Bannon and Kemper had to bring together the multitude of people necessary to make FARSCAPE. Most of the writers and lead actor Ben Browder are American, whereas the rest of the cast, and essentially all of the crew on the floor doing the work, are Australian. A number of people relocated to Australia from England, including Pete Coogan, production designer Ricky Eyers, and creative supervisor of the FARSCAPE creature shop, Dave Elsey. Brian Henson came over and helped set things up, as well as direct the episode “Exodus from Genesis” which was the second episode to air.

But who exactly was the show aimed at? It was not a sequel or a prequel, not based on a previous book or movie or television show. It was a new thing entirely. It had puppets, but it wasn’t really a children’s show, even with The Henson Company producing. This crisis of identity became more and more clear as the year progressed.

Although everyone involved gives credit to all the SF television, books, and films that inspired FARSCAPE, this show gave everything a new twist. The writers had to learn that this was not STAR TREK. There was no military command structure. The beings onboard Moya were all escaping criminals on the run, with their own agen-

Season one of FARSCAPE was a time of discovery. The process of discovery involved not just the audience, but also the people making FARSCAPE. They had to decide just what kind of a show they were making,



das, forced together. There are no rules, no common goals, no familiar aliens as the show began. Even the archetypes initially presented by some of the characters quickly changed into something else. The audience would not recognize anyone or anything, except for John Crichton, FARSCAPE's Everyman.

While O'Bannon worked most of the time from the United States, it largely fell on David Kemper to get the show up and running from Australia, and to help define the scope, direction, and tone of FARSCAPE. O'Bannon and Kemper were comfortable with this division of labor, with O'Bannon working on scripts and Kemper focusing on production early on. Said Andrew Prowse, who became one of FARSCAPE's four key directors, as well as production consultant during the first season, "I think the thing that held it together for me was David Kemper's enthusiasm about it. That was one of the keys to making the first series work: His unshakeable belief that the show was going to work. He had a vision for it—one that was taking over from Rockne's initial creation of the show—and he stuck to it. The other thing that he did which was extraordinary was to take the people around him and give them a kind of freedom. He had faith in the show, faith in the people to let us all go and see what came out the other end. Therein lies the organic nature of the show, which is still continuing. We never quite know what is going to happen in an episode. Additions to it are provided by people like Ben, or the Crea-



Who would you trust?: Matala and Verell (top) hide a secret agenda, while Rorf and Rorg (immediately above) prepare for their cue.

ture Shop. The directors are sometimes unpredictable, and sometimes just lift the show out into another direction, or lift it out of the script. Sometimes we are more successful at it than others. But on the whole, that kind of freedom has given the show an energy and a fresh approach, I think."

The writing staff has had to learn their way. Said O'Bannon, "We didn't have a template. We had a premiere script to show people obviously, and as the season went on we had film to show people. We had a tone and that sort of thing to present, but early on it really was tough. It wasn't like STAR TREK where you can at least look at the original STAR TREK. If you are doing VOYAGER or DEEP SPACE NINE you can say, 'Okay, it's NEXT GENERATION but we are going to add these bells and whistles and these changes.' We didn't have any of that. It was trying to figure out for ourselves what the tone of the show was going to be, but also trying to find other writers who could come in and do that. That's why Ricky Manning was such a godsend. He came in just to freelance a script for us,

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He talked to Browder about it, saying, "'We have the opening shot, and there is an argument, and you take off. When we come back at the top of Act One, it's three months later, and you've got a beard, and you're sitting on the shuttle and you are fishing, and it's a love story with a princess.' Ben went, 'I get to grow a beard?' I said, 'Just don't shave for three weeks, and then we'll shoot it.'"

Continued Kemper, "Everyone went and saw JEREMIAH JOHNSON and then came in and had ideas. We wanted a statue that kind of looked like Rygel, but didn't. Ricky Eyres comes up with the idea of three rocks that look completely different from each other, although when you get down to an Hynerian size and look upwards, they form an Hynerian. That was smart."

"Please help me. They won't tell you what I've done, because they are embarrassed. You wouldn't consider it a crime. I beg you for amnesty."
—Chiana (Gigi Edgley)

DURKA RETURNS

★★★

Production # 10115. Airdate 8/13/99. Written by Grant McAloon. Directed by Tony Tilse.

The pregnant Moya comes out of an uncontrolled Starburst and accidentally damages another ship, which she brings on board to help repair. From the ship exit three individuals, a Nebari named Salis (Tiriell Mora), a chained prisoner named Chiana, and an individual whom Rygel recognizes as the supposedly dead Durka. Rygel tries to convince his shipmates that Durka is still evil, but Salis insists that he has been made placid by 100 cycles of stasis and mental cleansing, a process that Chiana, a wild but attractive young Nebari, will also undergo. Rygel wants to kill Durka. Chiana wants to escape. When someone kills Salis, events are set in motion that change the future for everyone.

Said Tilse, "That episode to me was great, because it was the introduction of Chiana as a character, and the introduction of the whole Nebari. Durka returns as a villain for that piece. It was great to be involved with the introduction Chiana, and the development of the character and the way we rehearsed her and got her into the Chiana that she is. Gigi had come in with very strong ideas about what she wanted to do with the character. We discussed it, mulled a few things over, changed a few things, but basically it's pretty true to what she wanted to do with it. She really wanted to do this physical thing—I think that was a great choice of hers, that movement. She's got a great sense of timing, and looks."

While Edgley did not know it yet, she would become a regular cast member.

Who actually killed Salis? Laughed Tilse, "I can't answer that. We, the people who were involved with it, knew when we were shooting it. But I would like to leave that out there."

Friend or foe? A supposedly pacified adversary reappears in "Durka Returns," the episode that introduced the Nebari Chiana to the series.



FARSCAPE

Won't Get Fooled Again

Would the producers dare repeat the "Crichton returns to Earth" gimmick? Yes...and No.

By Anna L. Kaplan

For "Won't Get Fooled Again," the FARSCAPE producers decided to find a way to send Crichton back to Earth in a manner different from season one's "A Human Reaction." Unlike the previous episode, the Crichton of "Fooled" is now so savvy of the ways of the universe he has found himself trapped in that in no way could he fully buy into the illusion of a genuine homecoming. As a result, what starts out as a fairly convincing facsimile of his world rapidly deteriorates into a surprising and surreal series of encounters. It would fall to the human to figure out what was going on.

"Won't Get Fooled Again" was written by Richard Manning. "For 'Won't Get Fooled Again,'" the author explained, "David Kemper told me to, 'push it. Be freaky, get surreal.' The most challenging part of the episode wasn't coming up with the insanity, but making it all ultimately make sense. We knew that if we gave Crichton a back-on-Earth delusion after Justin Monjo did it so memorably in 'A Human Reaction,' neither Crichton nor the audience would believe it for a moment. Hence the title, borrowed from a classic Who song. We didn't even try to make it believable. As Crichton points out: once Zhaan shows up as a blue psychiatrist, he can't possibly think he's back on Earth. But then, what is the game? How is Crichton supposed to react?"

"Everyone not only got into the swing of the lunacy, but added to it. The script puts Scorpius on the hood of Crichton's convertible, but Ben—whose performance is brilliant and fearless—came up the windshield wiper gag. Rowan Woods, who also directed 'A Human Reaction,'

about it,' but I'm like, 'I'm scared to death about this.' I'm worried because one of the signatures of FARSCAPE is its movement through pieces—camera movement, movement through scenes, and movement of bodies within scenes. We were limited in what we could

and he sees the X-ray box, and he goes, 'Right there.' I said, 'Yeah, that's it.' So the X-rays became our slide show, our visual out. Boom, there's the Scarran; boom there's the gun.

"Wayne and I had to go back in and reconstruct the entire scene in post for ADR because we were running a high speed camera as one of two cameras shooting that day—we had two cameras rolling simultaneously, one on one side, and another on the other side. It took me over two days to do the ADR for that show, for that episode, which is an excessive amount of time. Angus Robertson in ADR was incredibly patient—I was like, 'No, it's not good enough. Got to do that again. I can do that better.' Then, Rowan would come in, and go, because he knew it so well, 'You know, there's a line there that you shifted. I think the original is better.' I'd go, 'Angus, pull up the takes that we've done,' and he'd go through ten takes of ADR and just pull the word out. Tremendous care was taken by Rowan over it. That's for a single episode of a television show, and that's why I say it's like a film."

Such extra caution was strongly motivated: Everyone recognized the high quality of Richard Manning's script. Said Browder, "The script is fantastic. It treads a very careful line, because there is not a lot of plot. What plot it has is deftly held, and beautifully hidden. In some ways it's a character piece, but then you also get all the other



DON'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES! "Fooled's" incongruous Earth is in stark contrast to the dark realism of season one's "A Human Reaction."

tion,' had an absolute ball with the thing—the one scene he was most worried about was at the end of Act Three: Four pages, with Crichton handcuffed to a hospital bed and Scorpius explaining the plot to him."

Said Browder, "Rowan and I were worried about the scene between Scorpius and Crichton, because Crichton is chained to the bed. It's a small room, there is no room to move, it's a conversation. Ricky goes, 'It's you and Wayne. I'm not worried

do there. It's just the two of us, and we are talking plot, we are talking exposition."

Browder laughed. "We were talking about it and at one point I said, 'Rowan, it feels like there ought to be a slide show in here, because there are so many things he's talking about. He's talking about Scarrans, and it feels like a slide show.' We bounced it back and forth. When we first got into the room—we weren't shooting the scene that day—Rowan looks at the wall

characters playing these fantastic roles. We got that script, and we looked at it, and I saw Richard Manning in the parking lot and a prostrated myself on the parking lot in front of him and said, 'Thank you, thank you. I love this.'

"Rowan was nervous about it for the same reason that I was nervous about it, because it was a good script and we knew it was a good script. If a script has problems then you start problem solving. But when a script is really good, you go, 'How do I deliver what's here? And how do I make what's here better?' because that's your job. Because it's a story where Crichton is losing his mind, getting the transitions right, so they don't jump, is difficult. If you had film, and time to think about it, meditate on it, look at the rushes and all the rough-cuts, it would be okay. But we don't—we are shooting a ten-day schedule. So it was fascinating to do. Claudia, Anthony, Virginia, Gigi, Lani, Wayne, all of them came with game. Everybody just showed up with their game, and they all played. Not every episode is that way."

When Crichton realizes that the Scorpius in the illusion is the "real thing" who is trying to save him, he starts to compare the villain to two very famous movie allies, both pulled, perhaps not coincidentally, from the work of Jimmy Stewart: *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE*'s Clarence, and *HARVEY*'s Harvey. Browder laughed, "The Harvey-Clarence thing wasn't in the script, and I wasn't sure about it. I said, 'During the offs, because I am mostly listening, when I have a line I am going to take some time and riff on a theme.' I just totally made it up. I'm going, 'He's Harvey. He's Clarence.' The audience is going to think he's Harvey and Clarence anyway, so I've got to say it at some point, and then put it in a very weird, insane context, where Crichton just starts cackling, 'You're Harvey. You're Clarence. Harvey-Clarence, Harvey.' Rowan puts it right in there and the writers go, 'Yeah.'"

At the other end of the emotional extreme came a sequence in which Crichton encounters his long-dead mother, fully cognizant that the woman before him isn't real. Given the incon-

gruity of the situation, Browder delivered a performance that ran the full gamut of joy and sadness. Said the actor, "Last year, when I was more apt to pitch things, I started considering why Crichton never talks about his mom. Every now and then, something about Mom would come up, and I would just gloss over any reference to Mom, would never improvise anything about her. There's a reason: I don't think he should talk about his mom. When she



died, he wasn't there for her, and that's the whole thing. I have that line in 'Fooled' that's so real: 'You're not going to go. Stay this time.' It hits Crichton and hits the audience at the same time, and things become crystalline. Suddenly it makes sense. It's a very small moment, but it is played out beautifully, and Carmen Duncan [as Crichton's mother] does a great job."

As the episode developed, other bits of reality were woven in. Said Manning, "Wayne Pygram is an accomplished musician as well as a terrific actor. That's Wayne's own drumming on the jazz combo's tracks. And to answer the most often asked question about the episode: Yes, Claudia can actually roll her tongue like that, and, no, it wasn't scripted. I didn't even know about it until I saw it in dailies."

Claudia Black got to play a doctor on the "Earth" of "Fooled." She said, "Rowan originally didn't like the hospital scene where I first say, 'My name is Dr. Bettina Fairchild, not Aeryn.' He just thought it



THROWING OUT THE JAMS: Scorpius becomes an accomplished sideman and Crais bonds with a new friend on an Earth that, frankly, is just not right.

was boring. Now he says, 'It's one of my favorite scenes of all times, because contextually it's different from anything we have done before.'

"Aeryn does look like a doctor, even though there are some visual clues: That instrument that goes into the ear—I don't put it all the way through. I just

put it up to his ear, which is incorrect. Originally I was upset, because in most of the takes I did put it into the ear. When they went with the take that I hadn't, though, it makes it a nice little clue that he is not really in the right world. It's really shocking, in the right way.

Then, in the next scene, everyone asked me, 'What do you want to do when you come in after the truck has crashed into the car?' I said, 'What about my rollers?' When Aeryn's hair is slightly straighter, we put my hair in those rollers, and everybody always makes comments about them in the breakfast room. I call myself the walking wine rack in those things; they are hysterical. I'd walk in with those things on and my slippers and half my costume and my gown—no makeup on—and grab some food, and hear people make comments about them, and I'll have forgotten they were in my head.

"I had a great time working with Gigi, because Aeryn and Chiana are always too busy arguing to actually have fun. Gigi

and I personally had a riot doing that episode—we got to play around and be stupid and do sort-of BASIC INSTINCT lesbian-chic rubbish. Just be stupid; it was great fun. And Anthony is always a riot to work with. He was just improvising like you wouldn't believe, just going crazy with the opportunity to go beyond the normal D'Argo. I think he is given quite a difficult task, because D'Argo is only ever motivated by the desire to find his son and to avenge his wife's death. He vows he'll never be put in chains again, and every second episode he's in chains again. It's quite tough for his character, so I think this is a great episode for him."

Manning said, "The episode was filmed entirely in Sydney. The 'IASA' exteriors might look familiar if you watched the 2000 Olympics. Art director Tim Ferrier and his talented crew contributed that wonderful 'Florida' bar/disco set; Dave Elsey and the Creature Shop provided a leaner, meaner Scar-ran; and composer Guy Gross whipped up a haunting, masterfully understated score. Given that the episode contains, among other things, drinking and driving, Crichton taking a shot at his father, whips and leather, violence to Hynerians, cross-dressing, and Oedipal complexes, we were curious what the reaction of the Sci-Fi Channel's Standards and Practices Department would be.

"Their only note on the script: 'Please avoid excessive splatter effect on the walls after blowing up a character's head.'" □

"It's always the same here, Dad. Nice and quiet. It's late. No, it's space. I don't really know what time it is."

—Crichton

A HUMAN REACTION

★★★★

Production #10116. Airdate 8/20/99. Written by Justin Monjo. Directed by Rowan Woods.

A homesick Crichton is startled when Pilot reports the sighting of a wormhole that looks like the one that transported him from Earth. John takes his module back through the wormhole, and lands on a beach in Australia. The military gets ahold of him, puts him in confinement and refuses to accept his story, saying that since the wormhole has been open, they have been waiting for an alien invasion. Even Crichton's astronaut father (again played by Kent McCord) can't spring him from captivity. When Aeryn, Rygel, and D'Argo arrive, the suspicions of the military are confirmed, and soon John has to decide where his loyalties lie. He also starts to wonder why everything looks unchanged.

See "The Making of 'A Human Reaction.'"



Welcome home: The military offers a characteristic "greeting" to a returned Crichton, from "A Human Reaction."

"Starburst is technically the seam between space-time dimensions. Moya's power cells allow us access and we simply ride out the energy stream until we are pushed out, at random."

—Pilot

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

★★★1/2

Production #10117. Airdate 9/10/99. Written by David Kemper. Directed by Ian Watson.

Moya and Pilot overhear the group at a meal discussing the ship's weakened, pregnant state. Moya goes to Starburst to prove her abilities, but comes to a sudden stop. The crew seems to disappear, until Crichton finds them in apparently different dimensions on Moya. They must work together to save each other.

Kemper described the way this script was developed and written: "I love the sets. I walk around the set and I touch it. I start to invent in my head, quietly, scenes that most people will never hear. But I came up with something. Craig Barden was walking by, and I said, 'I want to do a whole episode just on the four sets; I want to do an episode where the ship breaks apart, like a rainbow. I need you to do some research for me: How do you light four different worlds? If you can tell me how you can do it, I'll write a script around your design.'

"He came back to me about a month later and said, 'Here's how I would do it. I'd use colored gels.' I went to Ian and I said, 'You want to know what 17 is about? The ship gets split into different dimensions, and I want it to be a rollercoaster. There should never be a moment where one character is actually not in motion.' He went, 'I love it.' I said, 'Work on a

and he picked it up just like that, really got it."

Manning commented about some of these important differences. "Writing FARSCAPE is quite different from other sci-fi TV I've done, particularly STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION. TREK's characters were trained professionals, competent and unflappable. Gene Roddenberry once shot down a story idea about Captain Picard having to face his secret fears. According to Gene, Picard had no fears whatever, not even secret ones. The characters rarely discussed their feelings, argued violently, made love to one another, or betrayed one another. They were well suited for Starfleet, but much less well suited for rousing television drama. TREK also developed a penchant for concocting technological nonsense to create meaningless problems and then solve them. FARSCAPE blessedly keeps its technobabble to a minimum."

Meanwhile, producer Matt Carroll was charged with bringing together a winning team. Said Kemper, "There is no FARSCAPE without Matt Carroll. Matt completely understood science fiction. He understood what we wanted to do. Matt went and hired the best people in the world: Lesley Vanderwalt for makeup; and Garner MacLennan [for VFX]. He signed up great people, Rowan Woods off winning his [AFI] award. These were phenomenal people. He put together a team that allowed us to make a great series."

Said Carroll, "Pulling the FARSCAPE team together was very complex. The key

creatures were made in The Creature Shop in London. Rygel and Pilot were shipped out and we had to train people to work them. Pilot to that time was the most complex creature The Creature Shop had ever created. It takes 7 people to operate him in full flight [see sidebars]. D'Argo required the actor to go to London for a full body mold and then we have to constantly refine the costume to make it easier to wear. Once everything was here, we had to design costumes for them. As a movie producer I tended to set it up more like a movie than TV,



but we had to shoot at a TV pace. I also used a lot of movie techs. The big difference I think in FARSCAPE is the strength of the writing, and the amount of VFX shots in each ep. By the end of series one, we had done more VFX shoots than THE MATRIX, and in 50% of the time."

Andrew Prowse, Tony



Tilse, Rowan Woods, and Ian Watson were the four Australian directors that gave shape to the series. Said Ben Browder about these four directors and the direction of *FARSCAPE*, "At the beginning, everybody is trying to find out what the show is. We are shooting in Australia, and they have never done science fiction, and I have never done science fiction. Rock is back in the States, and David is back and forth. So everybody is figuring out, What is this show we are making? The four directors had the show. They all talked to each other. The directors would come down on the set and talk to each other during shooting. They would offer suggestions to one another—I've never seen that anywhere. So there is

curve, as the vision of *FARSCAPE* got passed on to other people. Early in season one they needed a director to more-or-less oversee the other directors. "Let's assign Andrew and put him on staff, never let him go," Kemper remembered suggesting. "Halfway through the year, as I was melting down with no writing staff, I couldn't be everywhere. I couldn't be on the floor, I couldn't be in the edit room. We promoted Andrew. Andrew and I work in very much the same way that Rock and I work: He is in charge, in the same way that I oversee the creative elements at the beginning of the show. Andrew is essentially the most critical person to the overall look and sound of the show. Rockne created the vision, so you



Crichton vanishes in "Through the Looking Glass," a bottle show that splits the universe into its primary components.



Gotta work on those personality skills: A disastrous encounter between Crichton (upper left) and Crais's brother sets the dogged Peacekeeper (above) on an obsessive quest for revenge. Below: Crichton's Farscape module in flight.

tremendous input there, creatively. The main cast was in the flow. David and Rock seemed totally comfortable with pushing the boundaries of television, because they knew what our limitations were, and they knew the directors."

Geography added its own difficulties to the first season's logistics. Said Kemper, "All the writers were based in the United States. I went back and forth. For the first half of the year, the stories were broken in the States. Then, as we were getting to the end of the year, I couldn't leave. I brought the writers, the show, to Sydney. We broke the last six stories in Sydney. We have two writers rooms—one is here, still, and we have a huge one in Australia. We call them Writers' North and Writers' South."

Kemper described some of the learning

start there. Then the vision is passed to me creatively to oversee the scripts and the performances, and make sure that each actor gets enough to do, and what is the season-ender, and what is the order. I take care of it, and I oversee the whole thing. I am the general, up-front.

"Once the scripts are written, we pass them on to the directors and the actors, and then the actors and the directors wrestle to make the show. We are there and we help them, but it becomes more theirs than ours. It is more them now than it is us. The leader of that is Ben, in conjunction with Ian when he is directing, or Andrew, or Tony. Ben is like the quarterback because he is in every shot.

"Then the show passes to the post-production team. We have a tremendous post-

transition, because we have to have a dimensional door. Crichton is going to hear a sound, and he's going to go toward the sound, and without knowing where the door is, he finds himself sucked through. Eventually, he'll start to listen for the sound, and when he finds the sound he'll know that's where the door is, and that eventually allows him to run from room to room. You come up with something and tell me what it is.' That's the way we work on this show."

Watson said that this episode was one of his favorites. "David Kemper wanted to write an episode that happened in real time, so the crew had to solve a physical problem in something like two hours or the ship would be destroyed. He'd written it by carefully dividing it up into all the dimensions: the red dimension; the blue dimension; and the yellow dimension. As we started shooting it, I started to realize that for me this was going to be a really special episode. It's a good, simple story that allows you to explore different emotional qualities. It just begins with a problem, and then they solve it as a group. Then they have the meal where they are all celebrating that they can work together, and we hear the news that Moya is getting ready to have the baby. So it's got that real sense of celebration at the end."

Watson continued, "There are some great Ben and Claudia moments, some Crichton and Aeryn moments, just where they meet and stop and communicate. It's one of the early times where you can see the development of a wonderful relationship."

"It's a new Gammak base: secret; need-to-know only. But since you'll be taking me there, I guess you need to know. And yes, it is here, in the Uncharted Territories."

—Larraq (Paul Leyden).

A BUG'S LIFE

★★★1/2

Production #10118. Airdate 9/19/99. Teleplay by Steven Rae. Story by Doug Heyes, Jr. Directed by Tony Tilse.

A damaged Peacekeeper Marauder and its commandos come on-board. Captain Larraq is on a secret mission to a nearby base in the Uncharted Territories. He commandeers Moya to deliver his cargo. When Rygel and Chiana break into the cargo, they release a sentient virus which skips from host to host, controlling each personality. All are forced into working together to find and stop the virus, but before they can, all the Peacekeepers are killed and Aeryn is mortally wounded.

Said Tilse, "'A Bug's Life' was a great yarn. It was fun to shoot because it was such a solid story. Who's the bad guy, who's not the bad guy? We were talking about the virus—it was great fun at once to be infected by the virus and see what that did to the character. We tried to track its motivations and thoughts. It was important to get that right.

"That was a really defining moment for Crichton's character when he was taken over by the virus and actually killed somebody. Even though he knew it wasn't him that did it, it started something in Crichton, driving home how dangerous this sort of world is, which leads to the next season. His last scene, we had Ben there with the weapon in his hand. At that point, he's just coming to terms with it. I always liked that moment."

**"Danger, Will Robinson. Beware the Chair."
—John Crichton**

NERVE

★★★1/2

Production #10119. Airdate 1/7/2000. Written by Richard Manning. Directed by Rowan Woods.

Although recovered from her stab wound, Aeryn tells John that her paraphoral nerve was damaged. Without a transplant from a compatible Sebacean donor, she will die. The commandos left the coordinates to the secret Gammak base, and Crichton is determined to go there and try to save Aeryn's life. Chiana goes with him as he continues his Peacekeeper ruse. They manage to get inside the base, where they find Gilina, who is able to quickly obtain a synthetic replacement for Aeryn's nerve. Before John can get it back to the stricken Sebacean, he is discovered by Scorpius (Wayne Pygram), who—thinking John is a spy with knowledge of wormhole

production team. But somebody needs to be overseeing things. It's got to be consistent, and that ultimately is supposed to fall back to me. The guy that does it is Andrew. He is the guy that takes the CGI from beginning to end, works with the other directors, does the sound design, works with the music. I'll approve stuff if he wants me to, but we have reached a point where he knows the show as well as anyone in the world."

The watchword for the series—one kept on the writers' board and repeated incessantly on the floor—is "reality." Because *FARSCAPE* tries to be real, it can be unsettling. Said Kemper, "Sometimes things happen that you don't want to happen in real life, and our show tries to reflect some of that. Other shows don't deal with the reality where a good friend gets a disease and dies, yet it happens in real life and people understand it, so our show will deal with it. When things like that happen, they piss people off, but that's how it goes. That's what life is about, and our show is going to reflect life; it's a real show. It's got elements of *STAR WARS* in it, and adventurism, and *STAR TREK*, but ultimately the word that we always use, that we have up on our writers'

wall and everywhere, is reality. Is it real? Obviously, when Crichton meets a monster, the monster is not real. We haven't conquered space travel and there is no such thing as a Luxan. But in that universe that we have created, does Crichton behave as a normal human being would, as most of us would. We are humans, and we all look at his actions and go, 'That's what I would have done. I would have saved that kid no matter what.' That feeling you have, that's real. There's none of that hokey, science fiction, 'I can do anything. I am a laser beam and I can go through the walls.' It doesn't work like that. There is always a cost for everything. Everything that these people do has a cost associated with it—it takes something out of you.

"Everybody wants things to be uniform. Kids love structure, animals love structure. As adventurous as we want to be on our vacations, we have our routines, and we do things the same way. The audience gets used to that, and that's why they liked *DALLAS*, that's why they watch soap operas for thirty years. They like routine. Surprises are fun, but they aren't real surprises. Today, and then tomorrow, next week the

character is exactly the same as he always was. We bring in new characters and it pisses people off. We take our character, and he is supposed to be a certain way, and we change him for real. When we change our people, there are real surprises. They are
continued on page 54

All you want is alien love! If the thought of Scorpius having a lover (Claudia Karvin, below) is enough to send chills down your spine, the sight of them in the act will haunt your dreams forever.



Scorpius' Aurora Chair extracts a memory of Crais; torturous interrogation from "Nerve."

technology—puts him in the memory-extracting Aurora Chair. Although Chiana gets the synthetic nerve tissue back to Aeryn in time to save her life, Crichton is left behind, tortured by Scorpius, who discovers that John was aboard the Leviathan that Captain Crais is trying to find. He brings Crais to the base, both of them wanting Crichton.

"To be continued..."

Richard Manning's first pitch to *FARSCAPE* involved a story where Crichton had to impersonate a Peacekeeper to save Aeryn's life. He said, "We recycled that idea as the jumping-off point. 'Nerve' was the first part of a two-parter concluded by Justin Monjo in 'The Hidden Memory.' We knew that we were each going to do one of the parts, but it was up to us to divvy it up however we saw fit. To Justin's surprise, I volunteered for Part One. Only later did he realize that the second part's usually harder than the first. Doing the first part also meant I was the first to write the character of Scorpius, which was a delight. Wayne Pygram came in and talked over his character with the writers, even as we were still writing it. We decided that Scorpius should be a dramatic contrast to the high-strung, revenge-driven Crais; that Scorpius should be chillingly calm and controlled, coolly superior, and very hard to rile up. Wayne gave the character all that, plus an evil glee that makes Scorpius even more fun to write for."



FARSCAPE

Anthony Simcoe

It takes an actor steeped in the techniques of the theater to find the fierce Luxan's soulful secret.

By Anna Kaplan

Anthony Simcoe went through probably the most exhaustive audition process of any of FARSCAPE cast member. At the time he started auditioning for the role of the Luxan Ka D'Argo, Simcoe did not really know what kind of series he was trying out for. He remembered, "The audition was for SPACE CHASE. What was unusual about it for an Australian actor was that the tryouts were over a really long period of time, and involved what, for me, were many auditions. I think I auditioned seven times; that's highly unusual in Sydney. I don't think I've ever done more than four auditions for any other job. To have to do seven was just nerve-wracking.

"Initially, I thought, SPACE CHASE. What's this going to be like? But I did the audition and didn't think twice about it. Months later I get the callback, and it started to steamroll. The last five were quite close together, within the space of a couple of weeks. Rather than just having a team of people in Sydney approving it, the Sydney producers would have to okay it, and then people in London would have to okay it, and then the people in L.A. would have to okay it. You'd have to wait for each tape to go through the three cities, and that made it really nerve-wracking. There was no contact with anyone from the show, apart from Rockne O'Bannon, so we had no concept of what this was going to look like, what it was supposed to be. I was audition-

ing for D'Argo with a neutral English accent, because the brief said to do that; that's the way they wanted to take that character, at least on paper.

"Their original concept for D'Argo was like a Scottish pirate, so my original costume had kilts, which you can still see hints of now. When we met with Rockne, he'd say, 'Can you try doing it in this accent, that accent.' We were just working in a vacuum, auditioning with different accents, not getting any feedback from the people who were involved with the show. It was the weirdest audition of my life. We had to strip off, not completely naked, but down to boxer shorts. 'Okay, stand in a line, put your hands out like this. Put them down.

Now stand to the side.' You really felt like a piece of meat.

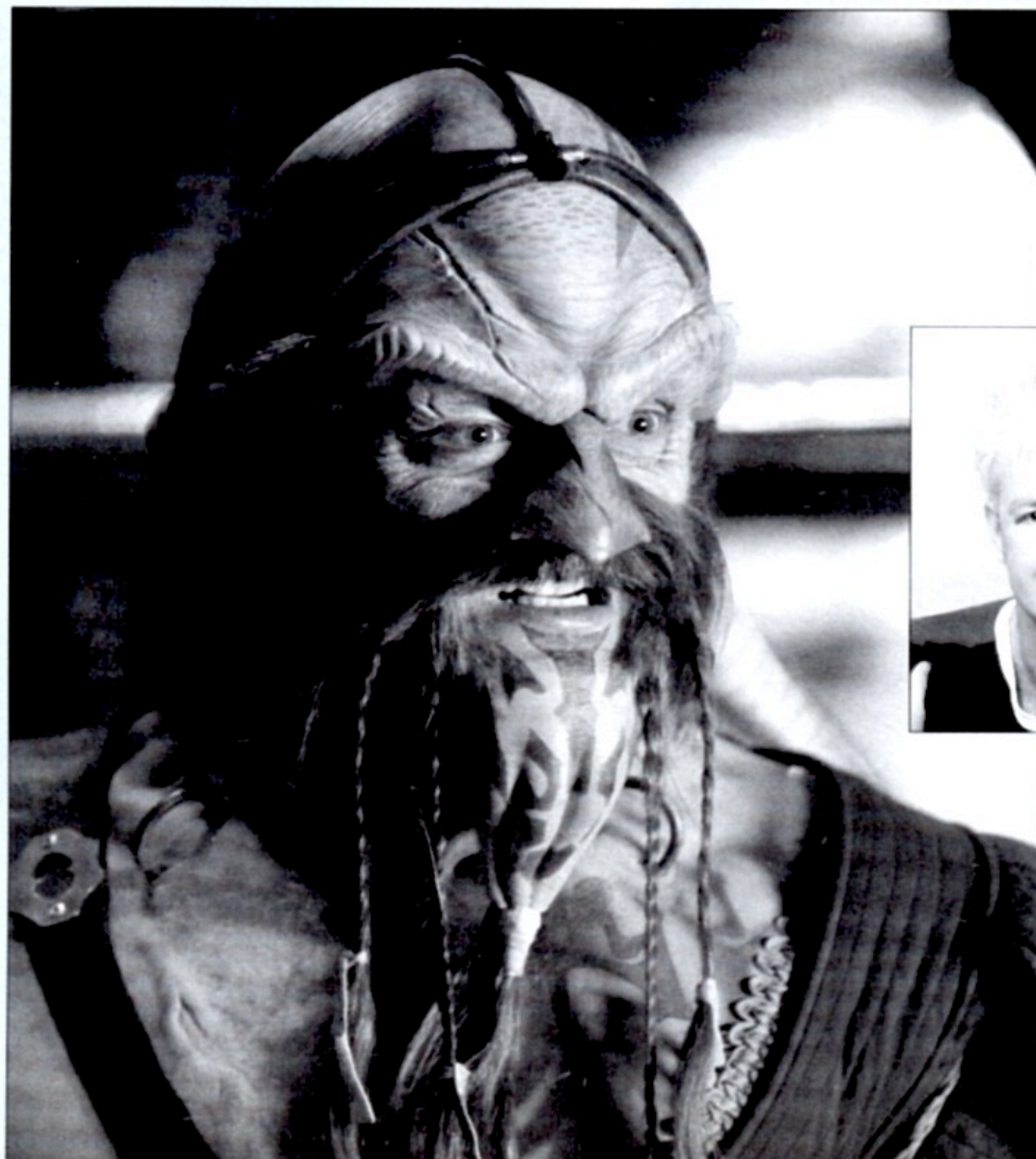
"I think it was just to see how fit I was, and maybe it had to do with the fact that I'd have to wear this prosthetic all the way down to my waist. What's it going to look like? How can we manage it with this body? They were tossing and turning and tossing over Lani Tupu, who plays Crais, and I for D'Argo. They couldn't decide. At the last minute they had a meeting, and they said, 'We can't decide. What will we do?' They said, 'Here's the concession: Whoever doesn't get D'Argo will get Crais. Does that make our decision easier or harder?' I think they probably thought Lani would make a better Crais. I could not imagine

playing Crais at all—it would be a very different Crais. So that was it. It was SPACE CHASE right through, then."

Simcoe laughed, "I got the job. Because they had taken so long in deciding, their deadline for finishing D'Argo was basically blown. I was directing a play in Sydney during the last stage of the auditions, and they tell me, 'You've got the role, fantastic. Be in London on Monday.' This was Wednesday, I think. What am I going to do? I am directing a play; I open in three or four weeks. I had to hire my assistant, and get him to take over rehearsals for a week. I flew to London, did the life-cast, flew straight back, finished the rehearsals. It was very chaotic and hectic, which actually added to the excitement of it. It felt very rock-and-roll, this sort of jumping on a plane, over to London for two days, fly back to Sydney, then open the play. As soon as the play opened, we went into rehearsals, and then we were away. It was a full-on adventure.

"In some respects it seems so long ago, now that we have finished two seasons. In other respects it's like yesterday, because when you are doing a show like this, especially the hours

that involve D'Argo, your life becomes a bubble, a sort of FARSCAPE bubble. You don't get to interact with many people at all outside, the hours are so long. It's interesting to re-



flect on all that, now that I'm so used to being in FARSCAPE."

Season one developed the character of D'Argo significantly. Initially an archetypal warrior, D'Argo soon broke out of the mold. During the episode "They've Got A Secret," it was revealed that D'Argo had actu-

framed for the crime. D'Argo sent Jothee away to a safe haven, hoping to re-unite with his last remaining blood-kin sometime in the future. That reunion eventually occurred at the end of season two.

Earlier in the second season, D'Argo and Chiana embarked

together and seeing what they could teach each other. I love working with Gigi Edgley. We have a really good working relationship, so it's really interesting to get onto set with her and see where we can take things. I think that sometimes we both felt that our characters weren't

served very profoundly, so it gave us a chance to explore new things by having that relationship with each other."

Added Simcoe with a laugh that is famous on the FARSCAPE set, "It doesn't last even till the end of season two. It's very short."

CHAINED REACTION: D'Argo has sworn never to be imprisoned again—a tough promise to keep when your physique makes it somewhat difficult to blend (above), and when those you encounter have other ideas (right). Below: Simcoe in the makeup chair.



ally married a Sebacean woman, defying all law and custom. He had had a son, named Jothee, and had tried to live away from society. But his wife's brother Macton killed the woman, and had D'Argo

upon what would turn out to be a short-lived but passionate affair. Said Simcoe, "I think it's great pairing D'Argo and Chiana together. It's been an interesting ride through series two, seeing those two characters to-



Simcoe enjoyed some of the wilder episodes in season two, including "Won't Get Fooled Again," and "Out Of Their Minds." He said, "Things like that are great for me, because I get the chance to show [slipping into the D'Argo voice] 'that I don't go around speaking like that' all the time. When you are in the makeup, it's seen as being quite limiting to what you can do. So when you the chance to, say, do small physical changes like pretending to be Chiana, or just really letting loose in 'Fooled' and

having fun and being stupid, it's great for me. I actually haven't seen the finished 'Fooled.' I kept saying to Rowan Woods, 'I want to do this gag, where I do this. Will we get away with it?' We did some safe takes and just some outrageous, crazy ones, and I think that most of the silly ones have stayed.

"The choices we have made with D'Argo are quite...Limiting is the wrong word, but he is what he is; he speaks as he speaks. Because of the range of that type of voice, you don't get a chance to rip. It's just nice to have opportunities where you can explore some other things. When you are doing a long-running series, the honest truth is that everyone gets bored from time-to-time. It's nice to have the episodes where you are going, 'I can really have fun with this.'

"In 22 episodes of *FARSCAPE*, I would say our hit rate is fantastic. I would say that we make ten really solid eps, four fantastic eps, and four terrible eps. It's nice when those four great ones come up and you can see it on the page."

During "The Locket," D'Argo finds out that his son is being sold into slavery. Eventually, the group mounts an effort to buy Jothee's freedom. After complex machinations, D'Argo is reunited with his grown son. Said Simcoe, "What's great is that Matt Newton, who plays my son, is fantastic. It was wonderful to really sit down and talk through who we both believed Jothee should be. Matt is a really great actor, so it's lovely to see him come in and take on the sheer difficulty of play-

ing this type of character. The problem we have on the show is that, when some actors come in and they see the makeups and they see the style, they think, Oh, this is a breeze. This is science fiction—I can do this. Take the money and run.

"They get inside the makeup, and they fail. Some of the

BREAKING OUT: The specs for your stock interstellar warrior call for frequent conflicts (right), but Simcoe also relishes D'Argo's more antic moments from "Won't Get Fooled Again" (center) and "Out of Their Minds" (below).



(1999) or guest starring on *THE LOST WORLD*. Simcoe laughed about the fact that many of his students are now joining the working world, including Newton. He said, "It's sort of a generational thing. I have just turned 31, and I've always thought I was one of the young guys. Now I am realizing I'm not. I lectured Matt at NIDA, and all my students are starting to come up

through the industry."

Simcoe looked forward to season three, saying, "There is a massive change for D'Argo with Jothee at the start of season three. What will be significant about it is that it will put the Jothee thing to rest. There will be a whole new rebirth for D'Argo, in terms of who he is, what he wants, what his quest is—if you like, what his grand, super-objective for the series is. Up to this moment it has been: Find my son, find my son, find my son. Now that we have met and that's starting to be resolved, the character has to be redrawn. I think that's really great for me, and great for the series. You don't want to see more of the same—you do want enough of the same to have that through-line, but you need to grow and change. It's going to be nice for D'Argo to be one of those characters that really has a significant change—I think it's healthy. Forty-four eps. in, it's time to reinvent yourself, or start to die." □

people have lots of prosthetics on, and they just don't match the stylistic level of what they look like. Their performance just becomes incongruous and boring. Matt's really keen on making sure that the performance matches the look. He is just so diligent and such a pleasure to work with that it's been fantastic. He, Gigi, and I, our journey for the rest of the series takes place between the three of us. To go on that journey with those two is great; it's fantastic.

"It was also great to get to those moments in the playing and think, I can't do any of this

on automatic. I've got to be in the moment for this. It was interesting how little I had to work in some senses, emotionally, because the series had already built up this relationship with Jothee so much. In some cases, it overkilled it—every single ep, D'Argo was having another whine about Jothee. It was nice for Jothee to finally arrive, so we could start to explore that need and that desire and that love just a little bit more profoundly and a little bit more intricately."

Simcoe, a well-respected and well-known stage, television, and feature film actor in his native Australia, graduated from and has taught at the internationally-known National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA). American audiences may have seen him in *THE CASTLE*

"Do you know what I learned while I was away from you? Everything I lost isn't worth a damn, and I don't want to go back to your past."

—Aeryn to Crais.

THE HIDDEN MEMORY ★★★1/2

Production #10120. Airdate 1/14/2000. Written by Justin Monjo. Directed by Ian Watson.

A weak but recovering Aeryn persuades Zhaan and D'Argo to go down to the base to rescue John. Rygel and Chiana are left behind to deal with Moya, who is about to give birth to her baby, a process fraught with complications.

Gilina is still inside the base trying to help Crichton, who has found an unusual ally in Stark (Paul Goddard). John is trying to hide his relationship with Gilina, but Scorpius is sure he



Moya gives birth; joyous event interrupting the dire doings of "The Hidden Memory."

is hiding knowledge of wormhole technology. Gilina puts a false memory into the Aurora Chair that implicate Crais, who soon has his own turn in the chair. When Aeryn and the others arrive, they spring Stark and Crichton, as well as grabbing Gilina. They all escape, after a battle on the roof of the base, but Gilina is mortally wounded. Crichton will never be the same.

Said writer Justin Monjo, "That was a new experience, rounding off a two-parter. There are so many people you have to service, and so many emotional arcs and plot lines you have to somehow resolve. 'The Hidden Memory,' for me, was just a learning experience of how to resolve storylines, how to tie everything up and keep it interesting."

Said Watson, "It was a good two-parter. The two together work as a good introduction to the series. It's also a wonderful beat on the relationship between Crichton and Aeryn, too."

"A distress call directed at us?"

—Chiana

"How stupid is that?"

—Crichton

BONE TO BE WILD ★★★★★

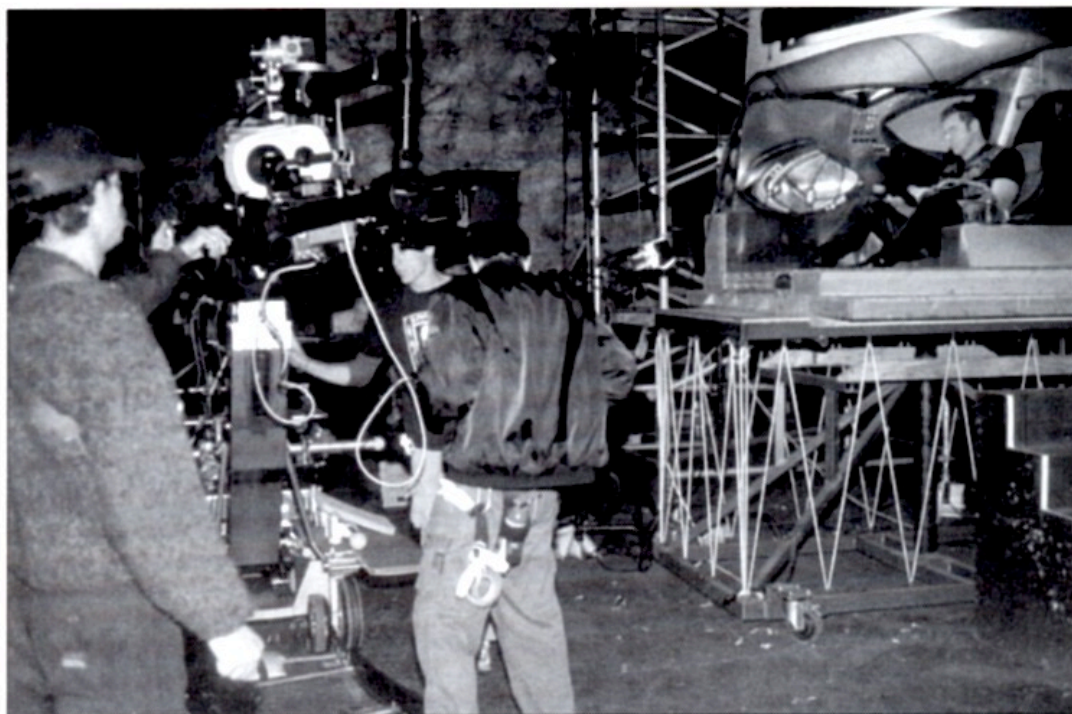
Production #10121. Airdate 1/21/2000. Written by David Kemper and Rockne S. O'Bannon. Directed by Andrew Prowse.

Moya and her baby are hiding from Scorpius and Crais in an asteroid field. The group receives a distress call from M'Lee (Francesca Buller, Ben Browder's wife), who says a monster has killed her family and she needs help. Zhaan, D'Argo, and Crichton go to her aid. The asteroid where they find M'Lee is a botanical wonder. Zhaan, herself a sentient plant, is amazed. It seems that the beast M'Lee spoke of is actually a botanist named Br'Nee (Marton Csokas) whose species created the wonders of the asteroid. He says M'Lee is a bone-eating monster who killed his family. Zhaan, Crichton,

motivated, they are logical. They are unshakeable, when you get down to it, because

to watch some of the early responses on the 'Net, as they tried to figure out why Crichton

wasn't this super-competent hero that everybody had come to expect. If you met John under different circumstances, he would have been. When he stepped on Moya, all of his rules changed. He's Harrison Ford with his head in the snake pit. He's that way for awhile, and as he grows more comfortable, he



they really had to change the people the way they did. But it does shatter the routine for the audience, and it pisses people off.

"We are all actually proud of the series. Sometimes magic happens, and it has happened. We are at the front edge of what could be a long run of really good magic, and we are getting better as we go. We have to keep it going. At the same time that it is very comfortable to the viewer, it's also very disturbing. Our best moments are when the audience is comfortable. It's comforting to know our people, and it's also really, really disturbing. That is what we have tried to achieve, and it's what we will continue to achieve."

Reality has a lot to do with how FARSCAPES main protagonist reacts to his situation. Said Browder, "It was interesting



LIVE FROM SPACE: Center: Director Rowan Woods checks out a shot. Above and below: On the FARSCAPE stage.

gets more capable, and starts to do the things he would normally do. Then these guys just turn it on its head again, and they strip away what they have given him. It's tremendous fun."

The idea of maintaining reality in the midst of an SF fantasy is part of what makes FARSCAPE, FARSCAPE. As John Crichton learns his way and develops feelings for his new companions, so does the

audience. Humor derives from his predicament—much of it stemming from the pop-cultural, references that Crichton offers with regularity. He knows the jokes—as does the audience—but his fellow space travelers have no idea what he is talking about. This is something that was scripted initially, but has been further developed as Browder learned his character and the writers saw what he could do. Said O'Bannon, "Some of the Earth references were in the early scripts. What's been the challenge that has been thrown at the writers' feet is that, as the first episodes unfolded, Ben would ad-lib terrific references, really good ones, ones that really got in there to sell the moment. The challenge for writers in later episodes was see how much they could usurp Ben's ad-libs, to try to beat him to the punch. What is Ben going to say if I don't write it?"

Added Browder, "The thing about a lot of the pop-cultural references: they are not gratuitous. It's Crichton's coping mechanism, a way of trying to box it up. This is Earth; it's Larry,



OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO: In the course of their adventures, Aeryn has undergone more than a few interrogations (above), while Zhaan has let her hair down (well...) as the sexiest pirate in the uncharted territories (below).

Curly and Moe. It usually happens at a time of stress—which is fantastic, because that is

usually the best time for a joke. His joking is integrated into his character, it's integrated into the scripts."

As the show progressed through season one, the writers learned how to write best for *FARSCAPE*, the directors learned the show, and all of the actors grew into their characters. Noted Andrew Prowse, "The show goes right out there into stuff that is sometimes confrontational and sometimes extraordinary and you go, 'What are these people doing?' I think the thing that holds it together is the really strong core of drama, the character interactions. I say it's not a science fiction show, it's a character-based show with science fiction added to it. I think the characters are really strong, and I think that's what holds it together, that kind of reality. You can cultivate relationships between characters, and the stories survive not on the fact that it looks extraor-

and D'Argo must discover who is the monster and who is the prey.

David Kemper said, "In story-telling terms, in technical terms, what we try to do is tell a real simple story with complicated character machinations. This is one of those stories where we started talking about the play and movie, *Mousetrap*. We didn't do *Mousetrap*, necessarily, but it's close, in that every time you think you know what's going on, you don't. It just keeps flipping back and forth."

Said director Andrew Prowse, "That's a really odd episode in the middle of the last four episodes of the season. You are on this Peacekeeper action roll, and out of the middle of that strolls 'Bone to Be Wild,' which I think is probably my favorite of the eps. I directed in the first season. There are so many things I liked about it: It really twists you; the goody turns into the baddy and back into the goody and the other way. You are never quite sure who's right and who's wrong."

Everyone was very happy with Francesca Buller's stunning work as the bone-eating M'Lee, in suit made by Dave Elsey. Said Prowse, "Wasn't that fabulous? Dave Elsey had this idea of making these spikes that would move. What a phenomenal performance Fran gave in that! There's one thing in there that just chills me: The scene with her and D'Argo in the transport pod. She wants him to help her, and she's starving and wants to eat him at the same time. I remember when we were shooting it on the set. The hairs went up on the back of my neck at this extraordinary moment."



M'Lee sends out a distress call: a woman in peril, or a dangerous monster?
From "Bone to Be Wild."

"I've got a strange life here, Dad. It's different, but it's my own. I have people who rely on me, people who I care about, people who mystify me, and people who've become allies, friends, and people who teach me patience, and people who teach me other things...This is John Crichton, somewhere in the universe."
—John Crichton.

FAMILY TIES

★★★★

Production #10122. Airdate 1/28/2000. Written by Rockne S. O'Bannon. Directed by Tony Tilse.

As Moya, her baby, and those aboard hide in the asteroid field, Rygel takes a transport pod straight to the Peacekeeper Command Carrier, hoping to make a deal. Rygel learns quickly that Scorpius, not Crais, is in control, and that his life is worth nothing no matter what happens. He agrees with Crais that they will flee together back to Moya. Rygel and Crais get exactly the reception they deserve: Everyone wants to kill Crais, and they aren't very happy with Rygel. Scorpius is trying to make the baby ship give itself away. The group must come up with a way to get both both Moya and her baby—a hybrid, Peacekeeper/Leviathan gunship that Aeryn names Talyn—away from Scorpius, but they are afraid Talyn is too young to Starburst. In the end,



D'Argo and Crichton go off on a suicide mission to blow up the Gammak base, divert Scorpius, and allow Moya to escape with Talyn. Aeryn, in a Prowler, will try to rescue them, but Crais steals Talyn. The first season ends as Moya, with Rygel, Zhaan and Chiana on board, Starbursts to safety. John and D'Argo are floating free in space above the burning oil fields of the Gammak Base. Aeryn is waiting to save them. Crais has gone into hiding with Talyn, and Scorpius and his fleet are still hunting.

Said Tilse, "I think 'Family Ties' is a great title because it did sum up that whole script, and in a sense, where all the relationships were at the end of the series. 'Family Ties' has a very strong emotional setup all the way through. That was one my favorites of the season, just because of that emotional connection between all the cast."

How did they film D'Argo and Crichton floating in space? Answered Tilse, "We had them rigged up on wires against a greenscreen. We hung the guys up about ten feet in the air, and swung them around and shot. It's a little bit uncomfortable, especially for Anthony, playing D'Argo with all the prosthetics on. They were composited into space, into our CG shots, later on. It was worth the effort. I think that was actually the last shot we shot for the series."

Recalled David Kemper, "I said, 'What I want to do for the end of the year is, I want Crichton and D'Argo floating in space, with spacesuits.' They said, 'We can't make a space suit for D'Argo. His head is too big, with all the tentacles.' I said, 'Luxans can breath in space—we figured that out in Ep 11. Get a spacesuit for Crichton, start building it now.' When we had the Gammak base, I said to everybody, 'Let's make the Gammak base an oil-covered moon, so we can ignite the moon. I want the whole planet on fire.' We built a story out from a notion—the last shot of the year—of D'Argo and Crichton hanging over a moon that's on fire. The last four eps of the year worked backwards from that image."

SEASON TWO



Crais and Aeryn tussle on the deck of Talyn; battle for the future of a gunship, from "Mind the Baby."

"You want to have a midlife crisis? Fine. Just ditch the firm, head off to Maui, shack up with the supermodel. But you do not get to keep the Porsche; you don't get the keys to Moya's baby."

—Crichton to Crais

MIND THE BABY

★★★1/2

Production #10202. Airdate 3/17/2000. Written by Richard Manning. Directed by Andrew Prowse.

D'Argo awakens to discover that Aeryn has rescued him and Crichton in time. She won't talk about it much, because she has made a deal with Crais, who helped her. Crais is still on Talyn, and needs Aeryn's assistance in dealing with the baby gunship. When Aeryn tells Crichton, he goes after

dinary or those people are out there, but the fact that the relationships between the characters work. My theory is that it doesn't matter how far out anything is, as long as the character relationships work, as long as that is the reality that grounds you. In a way, the further out into the universe you go, the crazier you go, the more centered the character

relationships need to be, the clearer they need to be. Then the stories hang together."

Different people point to different moments that made the first season of FARSCAPE click. Kemper noted that two scenes shaped FARSCAPE in a fundamental way: One occurred in "Through The Looking Glass" when Ben Browder decided to embrace the humor during Crichton's rendezvous with Rygel in the Happy World. "When I wrote the Happy World," Kemper noted, "the show didn't have any humor yet. It had humor everywhere, but it never had those kinds of yucks. Ben was a little nervous about doing it, and then on his own he just went, 'You know what? Go for it.' He tells the other actors, 'Just go for it. The worst that could happen is you make a fool of yourself.' When we all saw the dailies of him and Rygel, we were on the floor. Ben was so relieved. He said, 'You know something? We can do anything on this show we want.' That was one piece of the puzzle."

The other breakthrough eventually found its way to "DNA Mad Scientist," but had its origins all the back in the shooting of the first episode, as members of the Henson Creature Shop initially brought Pilot on-line. Said Kemper, "They were all so

“They were proud of Pilot. They were setting him up and testing him out, and I walked into the room and said, ‘Can we cut off an arm?’”

—The Henson Creature Shop meets the producer's prerogative per David Kemper—

proud of Pilot. They're setting him up, and getting him ready, and testing out his animatronics. I walk into the room. Rock walks into the room. Pilot is huge; he's gorgeous. I go, 'Can we cut one of his arms off?' That's the first thing that came into my head. [Puppeteer] Mack Wilson looks at Rock and he goes, 'But you wanted him to have

four arms.' I said, 'I don't mean cut it off permanently. I mean in an episode, can D'Argo come in with his Qualta blade and cut one of these arms off?' He goes, 'Yeah, they just come apart. We'll just unpin it.' I go, 'Okay, so we can cut one of his arms off in an episode.'

"They went, 'But then he won't have an arm.' I go, 'Didn't you know that Pilot's arms grow back, like lizard tails?' Rock turned to me and smiled and went, 'They do?' I went, 'They do now.' We left the room and we never said anything else about it. Four weeks later, we started to do 'DNA Mad Scientist,' and I said, 'You know, they want Pilot's DNA.' Rock looked across the table and he just knew. He started laughing. Tom Blomquist goes, 'What are you talking about?' Rock goes, 'We are going to have D'Argo cut off his arm.'"

In Browder's words, "The year breaks down, as I look at it, into three parts. There was the first part, up through episode six, breaking at seven ['PK Tech Girl'], where we were really trying to figure out what the show is. Then we hit seven, and Tony Tilse comes in as director and changes the visual look of the show. We go through a middle

continued on page 58

WHAT'S RIGHT WITH THIS PICTURE: In "Won't Get Fooled Again" Crichton returns to an Earth so blatantly out of key that his former crewmates show up in roles they could never hold in reality.



FARSCAPE

JONATHAN HARDY

A Classically Trained Actor Wholeheartedly Embraces the Role of a Self-Involved Hynerian.

By Anna Kaplan

Viewers of FARSCAPE know that Rygel, the very short, undeniably deposed Hynerian monarch, is a puppet. During the first season, the lead puppeteer for Rygel was John Eccleston; for the second season, Tim Mieville took over. However, those involved on a day-to-day basis with the FARSCAPE shoot cannot deny that it's actually Jonathan Hardy, as Rygel's imperious voice, who truly identifies with the pint-sized Dominar.

Said Andrew Prowse, "Jonathan looks a lot like Rygel. He'll admit that himself, quite freely. He's appropriated Rygel—he gets very upset when we do things with Rygel that he doesn't like."

Agreed Hardy, "I don't see any difference between Rygel and myself. I love Rygel. I am devoted to him—I think he's just misunderstood. I think he is actually the lead in the show. I'm absolutely sure he thinks so."

Hardy really enjoys his role on FARSCAPE. "It's such a good show, and its production values are high. It's not a set format—it can change all over the place, which is great. Some of the better actors in Australia, like Magda Szubanski, have been in it—she played a mechanic with a moustache [Furlow]. It's extraordinary the way the thing can leap all over the place. I've just done a scene where there is a fantasy: Rygel is wearing leather and whipping Ben ['Won't Get Fooled Again']. I wait with bated breath to see what's going to happen next; that's very unusual for a series.

"I've been in a few series over here, soaps and things, but

this is an adventure every time you do it. Somehow, they have managed to make a continuous story that's also a non-format show, which is great. The genius behind it all, apart from Rockne O'Bannon, is David Kemper. It's extraordinary, his ability to have that wacky imagination."

How long does it take for Hardy to voice Rygel? "It depends on how much there is to do in each episode. It can take me

anywhere from one to three days. It's difficult, because we are having to voice a puppet that has already been voiced by the puppeteer—there are cadences that one has to pick up on. But it's great fun."

Hardy is a well-beloved stage, television and film actor, as well as writer, who has trained and worked all over the world. At the time of this interview he was on his way to another stage appearance. He said, "I am off to play Einstein in North Queensland. I rush around and do all sorts of things, and they fly me back to do Rygel. The Rygel thing, to me, is wonderful. I fly in, do Rygel, get on the plane, and go back and do a performance."

Such a peripatetic state is noth-

ing new for Hardy, who admits that his scrambled roots have had a definite effect on his craft, especially when he opens his mouth: "My American accent is terrible. Mine is a strange amalgam, because I'm a New Zealander who trained in England and works in Australia. But then again, Ben Browder trained in England—I don't believe he's American at all. We are corrupting him slowly. He's a very serious artiste, so of course we are setting him up. He's

slowly becoming more Australian."

Offstage, Hardy won an Australian Film Industry award as collaborator on the screenplay for BREAKER MORANT. His long career has included many feature films. He laughed, "I was in MAD MAX

I, 500 years ago. I came down from doing another film called THE MANGO TREE, which was produced by Michael Pate. Michael Pate played every Indian behind John Wayne—he was always Chief Whoever, a utility Native American. He produced this film, and it went on forever. I came down, and George Miller said, 'There you are. I've been trying to get you forever. Can you just play this part?' I said, 'What's it about?' and he said, 'I don't know, but just

come in, will you?' Things tended to be more relaxed about filmmaking in those days."

Nowadays, Hardy stops by to visit the actors on the FARSCAPE set, a practice that has led to work beyond the series: "Anthony Simcoe has just directed a small film with Gigi Edgley and I in it. I play a garden gnome. It's great fun. I've just seen it, it's fantastic."

Not all of Hardy's appearances on-set have been courtesy visits, though. For "Look at the Princess," the actor appeared on-screen in the role of the Kahaynu. Even here, though, Hardy admitted feeling the spirit of Rygel exerting its influence: "In fact, when I did the Kahaynu, they shaved my head in makeup, and then spent hours making me look all white. If I had my hair on, with my eyebrows, there was very little difference between us."

Hardy hasn't always felt so closely identified with his on-screen persona. In fact, at the time he was dubbing "A Human Reaction," the first Crichton-returns-to-Earth episode in which Rygel is autopsied, the actor thought his time as the Dominar might be short: "That was a terrible shock. I hadn't read the script at that stage, and I suddenly saw him, and I thought, God, that's the end of my career as Rygel."

Luckily, Hardy will go on to voice Rygel in season three. He said, "We are now going on to a third series, and hopefully we will go on to many more. Just from an actor's point of view, one wants to be employed. On the other hand, it's just a fantastic thing to do. I've never seen anything like it." □



PUPPET MONARCHY: For the Hynerian Rygel nothing but the best will do, including having well-seasoned actor Jonathan Hardy perform his voice.

the captain.

Moya, with Rygel, Chiana, and Zhaan aboard, returns to search for Talyn. Scorpius is waiting on the Command Carrier, all assets pledged to capturing Crichton. Finally, the group is reunited. Talyn chooses Crais to be his captain, and both ships Starburst to safety after Crais tells an unbelieving Scorpius that Crichton has been killed.

Said writer Richard Manning, "'Mind The Baby' finishes up a mini-arc that started with 'Nerve.' It was rewarding for me to be the one to bookend it. 'Nerve' began with a confrontation between Crichton and Aeryn, and 'Mind the Baby' ends with a quiet moment between them as Aeryn wonders whether people really can change. I'm fond of dramatic symmetry, and this episode piles it on. When Crichton threatens to hunt Crais down if Crais harms Aeryn, Crais replies, 'You hunt me down... That would complete the symmetry nicely, wouldn't it?' Likewise, Crichton's 'goodbye' to Aeryn echoes their previous one in 'Family Ties': 'Last time we stood here, we didn't say goodbye. Here's hoping history repeats itself.'

"To balance the dark mood and the violent arguments in this episode, we tried to lighten things up with bits like Crichton and D'Argo's scissors-paper-rock game. Part of the fun of FARSCAPE is the inadvertent humor that our characters generate, such as D'Argo, in all seriousness, proclaiming, 'As John once said, I would rather go down on a swing' and Crichton correcting him - 'go down swinging.'

"And I gave Crichton a line I always wanted to use on TREK when the ship was under fire and consoles would spark and explode: 'Haven't you people heard of fuses?'"

"D'Argo, I can do anything. I can guide your ship home. I can help your friends. I could even make you a real general."

—Young Nilaam (Anna Lise Philips).

VITAS MORTIS

★★1/2

Production #10203. Airdate 3/24/2000. Written by Grant McAloon. Directed by Tony Tilse.

D'Argo, Crichton and Zhaan follow a lead to an old Luxan holy woman, Nilaam (Melissa Jaffa). D'Argo, who has not seen a Luxan for a long time, agrees to help her in performing her death ritual. Nilaam, instead of dying, turns into a young woman who promises D'Argo anything. But her transformation comes at a cost to Moya that cannot be accepted.



Young Nilaam, bearer of promises, but at a cost. Unbearable temptation for D'Argo, from "Vitas Mortis."

Said director Tony Tilse, "It was an exploration of D'Argo's character a bit more, a bit of his back culture. It was an interesting episode because of the nature of the Luxan mythology. I enjoyed it, but it was one that was very difficult. It had certain rhythms that were hard to get. I liked the ending, between D'Argo and her. I quite liked that arc. It relied heavily on

period where we know what we want to do, but we are not sure how to do it yet. Then I think on fifteen, 'Durka Returns,' there are elements. When we hit sixteen ['A Human Reaction'], we are fully into it. We have an idea of the show that we are going to do. Having said that, it changes from episode to episode. If you watch the show, you will notice that seventeen is really nothing like sixteen, sixteen is nothing like fifteen, fif-



FEARSOME FOES: Both Crais and Scorpius seek John Crichton, but for distinctly different reasons, something the Peacekeeper finds out to his dismay when he is forced into the Aurora Chair.

teen is absolutely nothing like fourteen."

In "Durka Returns" the character of Chiana, played by Gigi Edgley, was introduced. She is a young Nebari who refused to be mind-cleansed, and talks Crichton into letting her stay on board. A person who uses any means available to get what she wants, she is initially not trusted by the rest of the characters.

That unease was reflected by the audience's reaction to a new character being introduced so late in the season. But Chiana grew into the show. Said Tony Tilse, who directed "Durka Returns," "I felt that it was a great character. It complimented the rest of our characters. It filled up a space in our ensemble where the other characters couldn't go."

By the last four episodes of the season, things had changed, and FARSCAPE got darker. A new villain, Scorpius, played by Wayne Pygram, came into the picture. A half-Sebacean, half-Scarran Peacekeeper, he was meant to be an evil Mr. Spock, a half-breed who is actually contemptuous of all the lesser beings around him. He finds John Crichton pretending to be a Peace-

keeper in "Nerve," and puts him in his memory-extracting Aurora Chair. When he becomes convinced that Crichton knows how to make a wormhole, he continues to torture and pursue the scientist. By this time, it had become clear that FARSCAPE was not a children's show.

THE SECOND SEASON: MEET OUR HERO, HE'S NUTS

As the first season came to an end with an amazing cliffhanger, FARSCAPE was garnering no small amount of attention. TV Guide critic Matt Roush gave it a "Rave," calling it the best science fiction series of 1999. A second season was ordered by the Sci-Fi Channel, after FARSCAPE continued to bring in larger and larger audiences. Said David Kemper, "We have that freedom, and The Jim Henson Company is willing to ride, and encourages that. We walk a line. A lot of times you see The Jim Henson Company logo and you're thinking, I'll take my kids on Saturday afternoon. But this wasn't designed for them. Stephen Chao said, 'I want adults to find this show cool.' We got a second season because we think we delivered on that. Adults who do sample our show think it's cool, and they come back."

What they came back to was an assertive demonstration of the producers' determination to keep their beleaguered hero perpetually off-balance. If season one was about John Crichton getting acclimated

to life in the Uncharted Territories, season two was about how sadly he had misjudged his own adjustment. In season one, Crichton achieved some measure of competence. In season two, he gradually lost his mind.

Even though the people making FARSCAPE had settled in and realized the potential of the series during the first season, season two started with many changes behind the scenes. Many key people left the team at the end of the first season, or shortly thereafter. Matt Carroll moved on. "Carroll is a hugely successful film producer, of BREAKER MORANT amongst other films," explained David Kemper. "He's also a top television producer in Australia. This show that we did was enormous—Matt worked at it, and never intended to make it his career. Other opportunities came up. At the end of the year, he brought in [line producer] Tony Winley. [Producer] Sue Miliken also came in. Matt decided at that point that there would be a transition, and Matt would go back and make films and other television shows. He had basically set this up; the challenge was over."

Animal Logic, the visual effects house



DO YOU MELT-DOWN AFTER SEX?: Director Catherine Millar oversees the logical outcome of an alien tryst for the four-part season closer. Below: D'Argo's son Jothee (Matt Newton), object of dire doings to be resolve in season three.

that did work on *THE MATRIX*, was brought on for the second season. Said Kemper, "Garner MacLennan and Animal

Logic were the two big houses. They both bid on the show, Garner MacLennan won the bid. At the end of the year, Garner

MacLennan had, of their own volition, put more into the show than they were required to. They were fantastic. It became very cost-inefficient, and we couldn't make all that up. We loved them—we also love Animal this year. They didn't want to abandon us, but we couldn't raise the fees, because we didn't have the money. So we decided to part company. Animal was waiting in the wings—they said, 'We'll take it.' It made it easy to do, because you were switching from one top-notch place to another." Makeup and hair supervisor Lesley Vanderwalt left to do more feature film work, and was replaced with Paul Pattison. Pete Coogan went

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that relationship. It's one of those stories where you've got to figure a relationship: Start, develop, peak, and then end, all in the time frame of one episode. That's always quite hard to achieve, because of the pace at which it has to move. It's always hard to get that into one episode."

Said Simcoe, "It was a really difficult time then, because it was very, very hot in Australia. Most of the sets there with Nilaam and down on the planet had all dirt over the floor. The physical working conditions were extreme, but we got through it in the end. I think Melissa Jaffa, who plays old Nilaam and who then voices young Nilaam, is a wonderful actress. To be able to come on board a show like *FARSCAPE* wearing that much makeup, into a second season, I think is really difficult. I think she pulled as good as anyone that has come on the show. That was a great credit for her, and it was important for me. When you are not a lead character per se, when you are sort of a supporting lead, the A-line, big, meaty, backstory-stories don't come along that often. But when they do, you have a really strong personal investment in it. I was really happy to have Melissa there to see me through that."

"You said to me, anytime I want to jump ship, anytime I want to leave... Well, see ya."

—Chiana to Crichton

TAKING THE STONE

★★1/2

Production #10204. Airdate 3/31/2000. Written by Justin Monjo. Directed by Rowan Woods.

Chiana believes her brother Nerri is dead, because the life disk they shared extinguishes. She flees from Moya in Aeryn's Prowler, and winds up on a cemetery planet. When Rygel, Aeryn and Crichton go after her, they find her involved with a hedonistic and risk-taking group of near-savage young people. They want her to "take the stone," which means jumping into a 300 foot chasm, protected only by the sound waves she shouts during descent. Crichton wants to rescue Chiana from her reckless behavior, but cannot.

Said Edgley, "Ben and I said that's when we reckon the Crichton-Chiana relationship turned into the father-daughter bond. That's when we almost cut the umbilical cord of their chemistry, whatever was there. It's an interesting sort of draw-cut to pull on in later eps, but at the moment they are at a really nice standpoint, sort of working on the buddy system, which is good."

"I'm not deficient. I'm superior. Humans are superior."

—Crichton.

CRACKERS DON'T MATTER

★★★★

Production #10205. Airdate 4/7/2000. Written by Justin Monjo. Directed by Ian Watson.

After a visit to a Commerce Planet, the group returns with some food—crackers—and an alien named Traltixx (Danny Adcock) who says he can mask Moya and make her invisible to trackers. A short demonstration on the *Farscape* module convinces everyone but Crichton. Traltixx insists that they travel to a location where he can build a bigger device. En route, Moya passes by a group of pulsars, Traltixx insisting that the light will only affect lesser species. As Traltixx sequesters himself on Moya's lower levels and gets Pilot's assistance in shunting power and DRD's to his room, the rest of the crew become increasingly bizarre and paranoid. Crichton figures out that it is Traltixx, not the pulsars, causing the paranoia, and that the crew must kill the alien before they kill each other. Crichton the Ridiculous goes to the rescue.

The advent of Crichton the Ridiculous is a pivotal moment in the series; the ideas that came from this episode are even more critical.



FARSCAPE

Out of Their Minds

It's the Ol' Body-Swap Gag, But With Everyone on Moya Involved, It's Seven Times as Bizarre.

By Anna Kaplan

The concept for "Out Of Their Minds," the episode that ran during FARSCAPE's second season, is simple to explain, but almost impossible to execute: An alien weapon shoots at Moya, which causes everyone on board to switch bodies. By the time the dust clears, Rygel goes into Crichton's body, Crichton into Aeryn's, and Aeryn into Rygel's, while Pilot winds up in Chiana's body, Chiana lands in D'Argo, and D'Argo pops up in Pilot. A

phenomenal job in setting us up. Because he doesn't know the characters as well, we had to give that script to somebody on the inside to really make it sing. Justin Monjo made it work spectacularly."

"I have never seen six people change bodies in a radical way," noted Monjo. "That was the hard thing about rewriting it. The brain spasm it caused was phenomenal, because you can't even keep it straight on your own computer screen: Who's who now? It's hard enough in a

How are we going to make it clear to the people who are just clicking in that Ben Browder is playing Rygel?"

"There were times where even I wavered," Kemper admitted. "We talked about having different actors' voices coming out of the different mouths, because we felt it otherwise might be very confusing. When Rygel is in Crichton, we thought about having Rygel's voice come out of Crichton's mouth."

"There were a lot of people going for that," Monjo concurred. "I thought that was a mistake. I thought that was taking out the entire fun and the point of the show. The fun for the fans, and for the non-fans who are getting into it for the first time, is that they'll go, 'Look at that guy. Oh he's playing the little... Oh wow!' But if you actually put Rygel's voice in there, then what is it from a logical point of view: This ray that switched them made it so they all talked different? It would be clear, but it doesn't work logically. You have to go through that whole debate.

"Some people fought until the bitter end. There were a few of us who believed the actors would be able to pull this off—it wasn't just me against the world. I know Ian [Watson], the director, was with me too.

Recalled Kemper, "Ian said, 'No. We can make it work.' He

did. He really pulled off what I considered a great coup; a phenomenal episode that had a lot of risk attached to it. It was the scariest episode we'd done in a long time. You've got to give credit to Ian; you've got to give credit to the actors. You've got to give credit to the whole team."

Not that, once the decision was made, everyone wasn't painfully aware of the risks involved. "We will live or die on this decision," Monjo recalled of the final determination to rely on the actors' abilities. "If we die, we die—we have to accept that. Somebody said, 'They can all wear pictures around their necks, like little badges.' So we went that way: The DRD's can take pictures [of who is actually within the characters' bodies]. In the end, we could have done it without the pictures, because the actors were so good."

Said episode director Ian Watson, "The body switching episode, where they get zapped by an alien ship and they all change bodies, is more of an acting exercise. You see Anthony doing a wonderful impersonation of Chiana; you see Ben doing a fantastic impersonation of Rygel."

Continued Monjo, "Ben has to play Rygel, and he does it full: He's doing the neck thing and he's talking like Rygel. Then he has to switch and be Aeryn. D'Argo has to be Chiana. Anthony takes such a huge risk; he's right on the line, and he pulls it off. You usually don't have that in a science fiction show—you're amazed that



A GAME OF TAG: When crewmembers find their personalities have switched bodies, Polaroid opens up a whole new market in photo ID badges.

later, second blast switches everybody again. Try working out the seating arrangement for that dinner party.

The script originated with, and was credited to, SF writer Michael Cassutt. Said David Kemper, "Mike Cassutt did a

film when you change two characters, now we are changing six people. We wanted to make it so the fans would like it, but also we wanted it so that someone coming in and watching it for the first time would have some vague idea what is going on.

these people are taking these risks. A girl playing a guy: 'Oh, what are these?' You get beyond all that and you find even better moments in it, where all of a sudden Pilot can experience memories that Pilot could otherwise never have: of loving somebody, of having a child. Then somebody who becomes Pilot can have his memories of witnessing the birth of stars, of experiencing galaxies beyond what we have ever seen. You get the basic jokes out of the episode, but you keep mining it. Even the people who said, 'This is risky and probably won't work,' by the end, they said—grudgingly sometimes—'This works much better than we thought.'

"We had no idea. You just go on guts. You think, 'I'm not sure if [the actors] can pull it off, but if you don't give them the chance, you are stopping the show before it has begun.' We were allowed to have that risk, take that chance. That particular bet paid off."

Anthony Simcoe credited Watson with preparing the actors well. He said, "It was really nice to have Ian Watson directing that, because he's really interested in process. He started out as a theater director, so he really insisted that we go through a proper process with rehearsals. Ian said, 'You are all doing it, every single one of you. We are going to do pairs, and we are going to do individual things. We're going to videotape each character—I want you to do lines for other people.' It was definitely most satisfying for me, because I love all that process work."

Gigi Edgley had to portray Pilot and D'Argo. She recalled, "It was the only episode where we really had to rehearse with each other. I'm standing opposite [Anthony Simcoe] in plain clothes, and it was so funny. I am trying to restrict my movements, and sort of move like D'Argo would, because he doesn't have that much movement. I thought, 'Think that D'Argo is in your body, but it's your voice-box, so you don't have to get down as far as D'Ar-

go gets. You've just got to get the same rhythm.' It was even funnier that we weren't in costume. We were both human, going, 'This is ridiculous,' giggling lots and videotaping ourselves.

"It was great to see how much people invest in their character and the techniques that they use. It was like trying to parallel the character without making a parody of it, because if you parody, then the jokes don't work, they don't come naturally. You've got to try and really feel what it would be like to have Pilot or



D'Argo inside you. Pilot's jargon is all so space-technical—it was so beautiful to talk, and just to listen and say, 'It's like a red color'—really simple.

"You are so used to your rhythm, your breath pattern, and then you take on this completely different character, as well as doing two other episodes where you are playing your character. It was like, 'What day is it? Who am I?' I was dropping lines left, right, and center—it was crazy. We just ended up in hysterics on the floor, going, 'What is going on?' It was funny hearing other people doing English accents and American accents. Sometimes we muck around on set, and I'll be doing my American accent, and Ben will tease me about a pronunciation."

Said Ben Browder, "I loved doing Rygel. You ask yourself, 'How am I going to do this puppet?' He's got short arms—you

tuck your arms in; the first chance you get, you count your fingers. You explore your orifices. The first time he tries to stand up he falls over, because he is too tall. As much as he always wanted to be tall, the way I played him, he hated it. He just thought he wanted to be



CLOSE CRASH: That's Crichton as D'Argo who was in Chiana...or maybe that's Chiana in Crichton who's in Rygel while Rygel's in John who's in D'Argo...or it's John as Rygel who's Chiana, who's Pilot, who's...uh...Ah, hell...They're all mixed up, okay?

tall. A guy like Rygel, suddenly he's got somebody else's body, and he would hate it.

"Getting Aeryn's body, now that's a bonus. I had tapes of her, to try and get her accent. I gave her tapes, and we'd swap back and forth. Claud did a fantastic job with that, Crichton being Aeryn. Then when we were actually shooting, we would go to each other, 'How would you stand here?' I would watch her, and I'd go, 'Claud, is this right?'"

"We did some ad-libs. She would come up with some stuff, and then she would ask me for some. I did some ad-libs for Rygel, that whole bit about, '...in my royal bedchamber surrounded by my concubines, and everything will be fine.' I've always wanted to say, 'Royal concubines, surrounded'—I had to add that. So Rygel got concubines, compliments of me.

"It was fantastic fun. There are not many shows where I get to pee in the maintenance bay."

Claudia Black enjoyed the episode, despite its difficulties. She recalled, "That was an enormous challenge, and we weren't sure technically how we were going to pull it off. We were in very good hands. Ian worked out quite scientifically what he wanted, and

he said, 'Just hide the transformation in the choices you make as a character. What would Crichton do? How would Crichton feel about this?' We were asked to record all the dialogue onto a little tape, so if the people playing us wanted a reference for the lines, they could hear it—the accent es-

pecially. In a sense, by osmosis, we've all managed to absorb how people would approach their lines and their scenes.

"Ben and I are very difficult. I've got a deliberately hybridized accent: slightly British, slightly Australian—a melange of all sorts of voices, which is deliberate. I want there to be an Australian element to my voice, because that is my origin. It was very difficult to cross over to do Ben, because his voice, personally, as an actor, is hybridized, too. He spent a lot of time training as an actor in England, but he's from Virginia. He has that Southern lilt to his voice, which is a beautiful quality, but it's also Anglified. And it was difficult for people like Jonathan Hardy, who does Rygel, to then have to do voices like Ben's or mine, because it's impossible to cloak the depth of Jonathan Hardy's voice with anything that sounds remotely like either of us.

"I walked away from that episode very concerned that I hadn't done my job properly. I got online and read some of the responses, and thought, Great, they found it funny. They liked the episode. Terrific. I can walk away now and just let that one go." □

Ben Browder embraced this persona, and started his character on the path to Crichton the Demented. Scorpius first turns up in hallucinations here, inspiring the writer/producers to carry the concept to its most extreme conclusion: that Scorpius is indeed in John's head, literally.

Said Ian Watson, "Traltixx affects them in a particular way, but rather than just keeping it action-adventure, it brings another dimension to the storytelling. Because it's such a strong cast, it allows us to explore character rather than just story. That explains why an episode like 'Crackers...' exists. That was terrific fun to shoot too."

He added, "Crichton imagines that Scorpius is in his brain, and that's how it manifests. Scorpius, in a way, put himself into Crichton's brain when he was in the Aurora chair, because he wants to be with Crichton wherever he goes. That becomes a through-line through the series. It's a fantastic idea."

"I say we lock all of Moya's doors. We don't let anybody in, we don't let anybody out. That way we get no alien critters, no shape-shifting bugs, no mind-altering viruses, no freaky-deaky artifacts."

—Crichton

PICTURE IF YOU WILL

★★1/2

Production #10206. Airdate 4/14/2000. Written by Peter Neale. Directed by Andrew Prowse.

Rygel, Chiana and Aeryn visit the ship of a



Maldis has returned to extract his vengeance on the Moya crew. SF by way of Dali, from "Picture If You Will."

junk dealer named Kyvan (Chris Haywood), who gives Chiana a painting that looks like her. When they get back to Moya, the picture changes, showing Chiana with a broken leg. Chiana falls and breaks her leg. As the group debate whether or not this was the power of suggestion, the telling of the future, or something else, the picture continues to change. After Chiana burns and disappears, D'Argo gets stabbed and disappears as well. Zhaan's worst fear has come to pass: Maldis (also Haywood) has returned from his dispersal to take his revenge.

Prowse and production designer Tim Ferrier had to decide on the look of the artwork showing the future, as well as Maldis' realm. They took inspiration from surrealists like Giorgio de Chirico and Salvador Dali. Said Prowse, "It's a hard concept to sell, the idea of being in a painting. It may have been too ambitious in some ways. With the benefit of hindsight we could have simplified it a little bit, so it was clearer what was going on. But I was really pleased with the visuals on that, the way that painting warped, all the bits coming together. It becomes a mathematical exercise. D'Argo is upside down. Which way do I shoot him? What is he looking at? What is he reacting to? You don't get to shoot scenes with all the actors together; they are all shot independently at different times. I was quite pleased with the way it came together. It surprised the hell out of me."



back to England. Ricky Eyres did as well, about six episodes into second season, and Tim Ferrier took over production design. Said Kemper, "I might be at the pinnacle of my career right now, but I pray to God that somebody will let me do one more show, so that I can hire Lesley Vanderwalt, Terry Ryan, and Ricky Eyres, and say to them, 'Go and do whatever you want.' They are geniuses, they are really good at what they do. These are world-class people who work in features. Lesley Vanderwalt left us to go work on MOULIN ROUGE and then STAR WARS. Ricky Eyres has been on a hundred features—he did SAVING PRIVATE RYAN before he came to us; he did INDIANA JONES. We have people that came from THE MATRIX to work with us. They finished THE MATRIX and came over and

said, 'Okay, I'll work for you.' That is why our show is so good."

Brian Henson made some changes to Rygel (see sidebar), and when John Eccleston returned to England, Tim Mieville became Rygel's lead puppeteer. The cast all returned, with Gigi Edgley now a regular cast member. Wayne Pygram's Scorpius invaded season two in ways no one could have imagined.

Rockne S. O'Bannon stepped into the role of executive consultant, leaving David Kemper at the helm, with the assistance of Richard Manning. Said Kemper, "The second year, Rock and I talked every day, as we'd talked every day for ten years. He was in the States, and everyone else I had with me was in Sydney. I'd said, 'I've got to have the writers here.' Then I went to work

BRUSHING UP ON HIS NEGOTIATING SKILLS: It's not every astronaut who has to sweet-talk a Tavlek (above), or wrestle with the implanted personality of his arch enemy (below), but for John Crichton, it's just another day in space.



trying to clear the financing to get the writers to Sydney. I had the whole writing team for the second year in Sydney, as I will have for the third year.”

Added Manning, “It’s much better to have the writers and the production together. Constant trans-oceanic phone calls, with a 19-hour time difference between Sydney and L.A., aren’t the best way to work. Having everyone in one place also allows for the best creative cross-fertilization. The writers, directors, actors, production, and crew can all pitch in ideas. For Season Two, we dragged pretty much the whole kit and caboodle down to Sydney for the duration of production. I got kicked up to co-executive producer, and then, at mid-season, to executive producer, and was in Australia for almost all of Season Two production and post-production.”

The entire company saw a change of locale as well, as *MOULIN ROUGE* and then *STAR WARS* claimed the whole of Fox Studios in Sydney. The production found warehouses out by the Olympic Village in Homebush Bay, and converted them to studios. Said Kemper, “We have our own space. We have these huge warehouse things that we turned into sound stages. It’s what people do everywhere. We built our own ADR studio. We put all the facilities there. We made it easier for ourselves, because we own it. We built a special studio just for Pilot, because he is a very complicated character to make happen. Because this is our place, we can do what’s right for us.”

Added director Ian Watson, “At Fox, we only had access to two or three sound stages. At Homebush there is more space. More space is better—we can build bigger sets. And we are literally a javelin throw from where the Olympics are.”

With the team in place, season two began by reuniting the cast for “Mind the Baby.” Everyone survived the cliffhanger: Aeryn made a deal with Crais to save D’Argo and Crichton; Zhaan, Rygel and Chiana, aboard Moya, went off and had an adventure that would be revealed later in “Dream A Little Dream;” Moya returned to look for Talyn, with Scorpius and company lurking in the asteroid field. By the end of the opener, Crais had gone off with Talyn and the group aboard Moya was back together.

One on-screen bit invented for this episode—in which a rod in Scorpius’ head is taken out and replaced—turned out to



A NEW PERSPECTIVE: Spare but surreal design highlighted “Picture If You Will,” an episode in which the crew is imperiled by a strange painting.

have far-reaching consequences. Said director and associate producer Andrew Prowse, “There’s a real good example of the organic nature of *FARSCAPE*. When I first read the script, I said, ‘We’ve got a lot of Scorpius and Braca [David Franklin] just talking about what is going on. They are not going to catch Crichton; they are not even pursuing, really. Something has to happen apart from that, something that impacts on the relationship between Scorpius and Braca.’”

“Dave Elsey said, ‘I’ve been thinking about this. Maybe Scorpius has cooling rods inside his head.’ We talked a bit, and we found out how to do it. Then, in later episodes, that pays off in a huge way.”

Prowse added, “That gag wasn’t written by David Kemper or Ricky Manning. That gag was put in there by Dave Elsey and me, and then became a motif for a whole lot of interaction further down. That’s one of David’s strengths: He will take something like that on board and use it. If it works, we develop it. The same sort of thing [happens] with our characters. We bring in a character like Braca, for example, and he starts to become a really interesting character. David picks up on what works and expands on it.”

Kemper continued to bring back characters and actors who had worked out well,

It just had this mind-altering, drug-feel inside the painting.”

“We all have things in our past that we’d rather not have on instant replay.”

—Crichton to Aeryn

THE WAY WE WEREN’T

★★★★

Production #10207. Airdate 4/21/2000. Written by Naren Shankar. Directed by Tony Tilse.

Chiana discovers a recording made aboard Moya when she was still under Peacekeeper control. The tape shows the killing of a previous Pilot by soldiers, including Aeryn. As everyone tries to come to terms with this, Aeryn says she did not know that the ship was Moya. As the story flashes to and from the past, the audience learns the story of Aeryn and Velorek (Alex Dimitriades), a Peacekeeper with unusual ideas who tries to help Pilot. Viewers also discover the origins of the current Pilot, who turns out to be an accomplice of sorts in terms of taking the place of Moya’s original Pilot.

Said Tilse, “That was just one of those scripts where I read it and knew exactly how I wanted to do it, the way I wanted to get the look of the flashbacks, the way I felt the characters should be developed, the whole feeling and flavor. When I first read it I knew exactly the images I wanted to use. That was one of my personal favorites because it is an episode purely about character. Not much actually happens, but the whole episode is just driven by emotion.”

Tilse explained how they achieved the look of the flashbacks. He said, “We used a technique that I had always wanted to use called bleach bypass, which has been used quite a lot for feature films. When the film gets processed, you actually bypass a bleaching process. It gave it a kind of harder or crunchier edge. Everything felt a little bit more hostile. It’s quite tricky because you just don’t know quite what you’ll get on the final negative.”

“I really wanted to get the sense that Moya in the past was alive with Peacekeepers. I am reminded of when you’d have these beautiful ships that during wartime got commandeered by the armed forces, and somehow they were used for troop carriers. What was beautiful becomes more



The “radical” Sebacean Velorek propositions a young Pilot. Secrets of the past are revealed in “The Way We Weren’t.”

utilitarian. I just wanted to get the sense of the whole place taken over by this grayness and this disregard for beauty.”

Said Shankar, “That was the first story that I pitched to David. Rock O’Bannon actually took a nice, hard pass on the script before it got to screen. I probably made the mistake of taking as my first notion a story that heavily involved the backstories of some of the characters. When you do that, you are kind of opening a mine field to a certain extent, because you have the creators. These are their characters. Rockne took a really strong interest

in it and I offered to share teleplay credit on it with him, but he gracefully declined. I think it turned out pretty well. There is some really nice stuff in there. Claudia's performance is terrific. When you are feeling the way you do for an animatronic puppet at the end with Pilot, it's pretty remarkable."

"D'Argo, are you and Chiana together?"
—Altana (Justine Saunders)

"No." —D'Argo
"No, or not yet?" —Altana

HOME ON THE REMAINS ★★1/2

Production #10208. Airdate 6/16/2000. Written by Gabrielle Stanton & Harry Werksman, Jr. Directed by Rowan Woods.

Everyone on board Moya, especially Zhaan, is starving. Chiana takes them to a mining colony inside a Budong carcass, where she says they will get food. They discover that Chiana and her brother have both friends and enemies in this horrible place, where more danger awaits.

Said David Kemper about the amazing looking carcass planet, "'Home On The Remains' was a lot of fun. That was a huge set. I was totally impressed by what Tim Ferrier did with the set design on that, just completely blown away by how good it was, and how great the CG integrated with it. The CG people did a great job."

"All this time since we escaped from the Peacekeepers, I drew my strength from you and the others. Now I find myself incarcerated again without you to help me. Oh, John, I am so deeply alone, and afraid."
—Zhaan.

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM (was RE: UNION) ★★★

Production #10201. Airdate 6/23/2000. Written by Steven Rae. Directed by Ian Watson.

While waiting in a transport pod for Moya to return, a troubled Zhaan finally tells Crichton what happened when she, Chiana, and Rygel headed away at the end of Season One. They were searching habitable planets for Crichton, D'Argo, and Aeryn, and came at last to Litigara. On this planet of lawyers, Zhaan was framed for a murder. She has only Chiana and Rygel to help her, in a case with a predetermined verdict and a sentence of death. Zhaan also loses her grip on reality and begins seeing hallucinations of her friends.

This episode was initially called "Re: Union," and was the first second season episode filmed. Framing scenes were added so the story could be told in flashback. Said director Woods, "Originally it was set in the present. They decided to set the entire episode in the past, as if it was something that had happened to them. I suspect it was because the network felt that they wanted to start with an episode that had the entire cast involved. 'Re-Union' only dealt with several members of the cast, rather than the full ensemble, and I think they wanted to kick off series two with a more ensemble piece. We just shot a couple of extra scenes to place at the beginning and the end of the episode."

"There's some terrific work in it from Virginia. Through the pain of sensing that she has lost Crichton and the other members of the ship, she returns to the Seek. She returns to her priesthood, and that's the emotional transformation. She's now back in the Pa'u Seek."

"I want my body back."
—Rygel in Crichton

OUT OF THEIR MINDS ★★★

Production #10209. Airdate 7/7/2000. Written by Michael Cassette. Directed by Ian Watson.

Zhaan boards a Halosian ship to try to stop the Halosians from firing their weapons at Moya.

most significantly in the trilogy at the end of season two, but also earlier on. He said, "After 'PK Tech Girl,' I saw this actor with the creepy eye, Durka [David Wheeler]. I asked Tony Tilse, 'How is he?' because he only had two lines. 'He'd be all right to build an episode around?'"

"He went, 'Yeah.'
"Then I went to Matt Carroll, and I said, 'See if that guy is available. I'd like to use him in an episode coming up.' Matt called back and said, 'He's available. He'd love to do it.'"

"I said to everybody, 'Anybody got any ideas? We need to bring this guy back. He's just fabulous. He looks great.' I always have these file cards that I keep of stuff that we have talked about, that we are going to do. I pulled out like ten file cards and pinned them up to the board, and said, 'Here are some ideas. Here's one that has to do with Durka returns.' Somebody triggered to it, and off we went, we had 'Durka Returns.' That one came from simply seeing a one-day, guest actor deliver one line."

"Same thing with Stark [Paul Goddard]. We saw Stark in that one great scene ['Nerve'] where he goes, 'My side, your side, my side, your side...' Everybody loved that

line and we like it. It can be someone's favorite movie. It can be an event that happened to somebody in their life that we then cannibalize. That's what I love about the show, that we are really loose and unstructured and, in a way, unfocused. That works to our advantage. There's a lot of anarchy. There's a lot of freedom."

The episode "Out Of Their Minds" of-



Peacekeeper Control Collar
(Attached over bow of Leviathan)

scene. I said, 'You know what? We need this guy to do more. Let's bring him in and let him be a boyfriend for Zhaan.' We work that way a lot. It can be that an actor says a

ferred up another example of how a FARSCAPE episode incorporates differing elements. Said writer and second season creative consultant Justin Monjo, "We write

a script, and The Creature Shop goes away and they come up with a creature. These bird villains—they are bird puppets made by The Creature Shop—have to come on and they're supposed to be carrying a bomb. Where are they going to carry a bomb? They've got wings. I said, 'He's going to just vomit it up like birds regurgitate their food. He's going to vomit up some

with new toys."

Season two eventually became dominated by Scorpius. The audience learned in Season One that Scorpius was half-Sebacean, but did not really know much about his other half. Who were the Scarrans? Out of the cooling rod sequence came the idea that they were hot, and that Scorpius' two halves were thermally unstable. This would be made clear during the "Look At The Princess" trilogy, which revealed the instability as a possible weakness.

In the end Scorpius would become Crichton's real nemesis during Season Two. Although Scorpius let Crichton get away, it turns out that he had a much more complicated plan in the works. The writers figured this out during "Crackers Don't Matter." When everyone on board Moya started going crazy, John hallucinated images of Scorpius. But his hallucinations didn't stop once the episode ended.

"Crackers Don't Matter" was actually written to solve a production problem. Said Ben Browder, "Crackers Don't Matter" was not supposed to exist. We got stuck in pro-

duction, and we had something else slated, but they needed a ship-bound show. David Kemper said, 'I've got this idea. Here's the thing: Crichton is going to be wearing a cape and carrying D'Argo's sword.' He—David and Ricky and the other writers—basically constructed an episode around that moment, which is fantastic. Justin Monjo wrote the script. But when David is talking to you, you are going, 'Is this going to work?'"

When Crichton first saw Scorpius during the episode, the villain's image was on a beacon Aeryn found on a Commerce Planet. A better idea evolved from that one concept. Said Monjo, "We like Scorpius. We want to keep him. We have to have a way to keep him without physically having him come on the boat every time, or it's like he is the stupidest villain in the world. He gets on every time but he can't do anything?"

"The whole Scorpius chip in season two was the idea that came out of that. It's been lying dormant, and that's how we can keep Scorpius alive throughout our whole second season: He's inside of Crichton. We thought, That's a great idea. We didn't think

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While she tries to negotiate with Take (Thomas Holgrove, voice Nicholas McKay), the group on Moya puts the defense grid up. The ship gets hit with the grid at 62% and, for some unknown reason, everyone on board switches bodies. See "The Making of 'Out Of Their Minds'" for more on this delightful episode.

"I always thought I was a good guy, Chiana. But it was the least-developed one of me, the one I thought least likely, who did the right thing. Somehow, you knew."

—Crichton

MY THREE CRICHTONS

★★1/2

Production # 10212. Airdate 7/14/2000. Written by Gabrielle Stanton & Harry Werksman Jr. Directed by Catherine Millar.

An energy source of some kind penetrates Moya and engulfs Crichton in a big, green ball. The force increases, and the ball ejects Crichton and a Neanderthal-looking man, also Crichton. As everyone is trying to make sense of this, the green ball spits out a future human, another Crichton with no hair and ridges on his forehead. The sphere threatens to pull them all into another dimension unless they give it what it wants - one of the Crichtons.

Said director Millar, "I had Ben Browder doing three different roles, so it was pretty challenging. In two of those roles he was in prosthetics. In some scenes, there were three of him in the one scene. It was a really interesting metaphysical, philosophical thread, about who was the better man, morally. It was really interesting to do.

"Ben was fantastic. He had to differentiate so carefully between these three characters. He chose to play future Crichton—whom we called Futuro—with his childhood accent, which is a bit like Bill Clinton. Normally he has quite a straight American accent, but he is really from the South, so that worked beautifully. It was amazing work for Ben, because he had to hold onto the performance he had given, sometimes, over a week ago. He did a fantastic job in it."

"Humans don't live as long as Sebaceans or Hynierians or Delvians. When I get back, everyone—my Dad, D.K., my sisters, Cameron Diaz, Buffy the Vampire Slayer—will be dead."

—Crichton

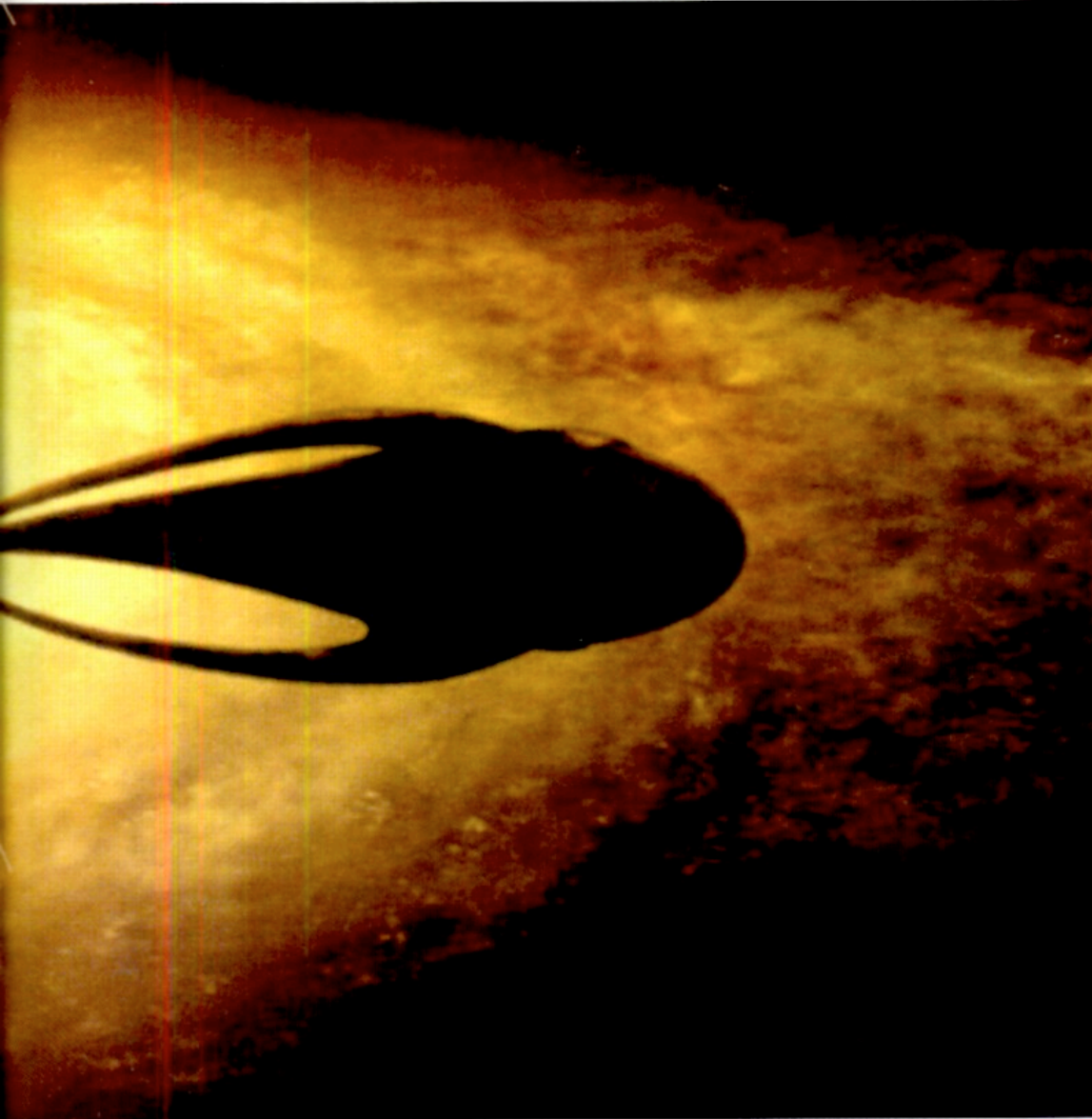
LOOK AT THE PRINCESS

PART I: A KISS IS BUT A KISS ★★★1/2

Production # 10210. Airdate 7/14/2000. Written by David Kemper. Directed by Andrew Prowse and Tony Tilse.

Moya finds herself targeted by an automated orbital Peacekeeper weapons platform. The group has found the planet that Sebaceans escaped to when they fled the rest of the Peacekeepers some 2000 cycles ago. It is a time of coronation: A huge party is in progress, with dancing, drinking, and kissing. The population uses a chemical to tell if two people kissing are genetically compatible—when Crichton kisses Princess Katralla (Felicity Price), the kiss is sweet, indicating that they are genetically compatible. Empress Novia (Tina Bursill) wants her daughter to find a mate and assume the throne, but if Crichton marries the Princess, the two will be turned into statues for 80 cycles to observe government at work. To make matters worse, the Princess' brother, Prince Clavor (Felix Williamson), has made friends with Cargn (Gavin Robins), a Scarran whose race wants to take over this area. Meanwhile Scorpius arrives looking for Crichton. The Empress forces the human to choose between the Princess and Scorpius. Once he chooses the Princess, someone—or many someones—try to kill him to prevent the marriage.

This three-part story arc started out as two parts, elaborating on a notion that David Kemper had about freezing Prince Charles. Meanwhile,



Across the seas of space: Silhouetted against a sun, the Leviathan Moya reveals its aquatic influences. Left: Design for the Peacekeeper control collar.

crawling acid.' It's weird, but when you see it you think, 'That's a cool little world.' You understand what the bird is doing; you've seen it before with birds. But it actually comes in late in the process."

Added Prowse, "None of us would trade in our jobs for anything. That's got a lot to do with David and his approach to it. I've worked on TV shows where the producer said, 'This is what it is. You go shoot the script and that's it.' It's taken away from you, and they put it together. It's got your name on it, and you are just basically a technician charging through your job. But David has always involved as many people as possible in the process. If you've got something to say, you get to do it, you get to say it. You also get to take responsibility for it, but you have a vested interest in making the show work. That, I think, is genius on his part. The confidence that he has to let people have their head is just fantastic. He gets things out of it that he never anticipated. He'll look at episodes and sometimes be completely surprised. 'Is this the thing we wrote?' It is the thing that he wrote but it's not, at the same time. David is the inspirer. The rest of us go off and behave like people

FARSCAPE

Claudia Black

Her Sebacean Peace Keeper is as much a fish out of water as Earthling John Crichton, yet Claudia Black finds the human heart in the alien body.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Claudia Black speaks with great enthusiasm about her character on FARSCAPE, the Sebacean ex-Peacekeeper Aeryn Sun: "I am so lucky. Originally, they didn't know where to take Aeryn. She was going to be perhaps a little younger than I am, about twenty, twenty-one. I am now twenty-seven. That would have made the relationship between Aeryn and Crichton quite different, because she would have been less mature. She was originally written that way when we started the series.

"She had to develop, because I didn't want to dumb her down. I'm just lucky that she's had, I think, the most room to develop as a person. The audience has become more attached to her, because she is starting to portray more human traits, which she didn't have before because, of course, she is an alien. It gives her a beautiful connection to Crichton since he is mostly responsible for her evolution. Being taken out of her normal environment has pushed her into a higher learning curve. Crichton is definitely responsible for the emotional journey.

"I would never have agreed to take a role on a long-term series unless the character interested me. Aeryn gave me room to play. Obviously, I had to take the writing department's lead on what they wanted to do with the ensemble, then, gradually, I would find opportuni-

ties to extend Aeryn, find different ways to reveal her vulnerabilities. I know a lot of women have said that Aeryn has in some ways inspired them—but at the beginning I think she was too damaged and behaved in ways that weren't necessarily moral. I think she's becoming more of a positive role model. I think that as she improves as a soul and as a spirit, she's become a more inspiring person, which is great."

How did Black get the role of Aeryn? "Originally they were going to cast Aeryn

for D'Argo, as had Lani, and Virginia for Zhaan. I remember looking at the original sketches for Zhaan, and it was an amazing drawing of a blue, bald woman with this flowing dress. I have all these vague memories, little images in my mind of the show in its conceptual state. It was called SPACE CHASE—they still hadn't come up with an official title for the show. It was also leaning too much towards a child-oriented concept. I think they wanted a broader scope, and I think they have always tried to open the show up to a broader audience.

"They finally said, 'We may be auditioning the character of Aeryn in Australia. We are not sure. So read this.' I read the pilot. There were a couple of original elements to the show which intrigued me: I liked the idea that Moya was a living ship, that it was biomechanoid; I liked the concept of the character of Rygel. And I loved the character of Aeryn. The casting agency had said to me, 'It's a pity we are not casting Aeryn from here, because you are so perfect for her. I would love you to play Aeryn, but I don't think it is going to happen. Just in case, we'd love you to put the scene down.' I put a scene down before I left; I went off to do a film called PITCH BLACK.

"While I was up there, I got a phone call saying, 'Could you please come to Sydney this weekend? We need to screen-test you.' As far as I knew, they weren't particularly aware of me until they saw the screen test. There was one line that I delivered differently from everyone else, and suddenly they looked up and took notice. I think it was just the one word that I pronounced differently that sparked their imaginations. I think the line was, 'No I do not trust you,'



from America or from England. I was asked to come in. They wanted me to read opposite other actors — the male characters who were auditioning — to help them through the audition. I was there when Anthony Simcoe and Lani Tupu were there; I saw Virginia come in and out for her final screen test.

"It was quite a rigorous audition process for all of them. I think Anthony had been auditioning for quite some time

and not had been underlined. It's one of the rules of auditioning that if there is any punctuation, you should probably ignore it, because everyone is going to be doing the same. I just put a really weird intonation on the line, and it got me the part.

"They called me in to do a final audition — that's when I met Ben Browder. I said, 'Can we run the lines? Do you mind?' He said, 'No, not at all. Let's walk down the corridor.' He was ahead of me, and as he was walking down the corridor he just started the lines. I wasn't expecting it, and he just sort of fell into the first line of the scene. I fell into the scene with him, and we just ran the lines. He turned around to me and he said, 'This is perfect. Let's just go in and do it. We don't need to rehearse this.' So we just walked into the room and said, 'Okay we're ready,' and did it. As actors, as performers, there was instant, working chemistry, and that was the most important thing.

"I went back up to the studios in Queensland and everyone said, 'How did it go?' I said, 'I can work with this guy. I know I can.' I knew that it was an important element to the show, the chemistry between Aeryn and Crichton. I think it's part of the success of a show as well when the two romantic leads obviously have a professional zing; there is a spark between them, and you can tell that they enjoy working together. That's the sort of chemistry that Ben and I have together when we are working. That is delight, and it's something that I count on.

"That audition was life-changing. Instantly I knew it was a show that I wanted to work on. I knew the DOP; I loved the makeup artist, Lesley Vanderwalt. It was just a fantastic team. Although you never have any certainty that a show will be successful, it had all the right elements."

Although already finished with season two of *FARSCAPE*, Black had no problem calling upon her memories of season one, especially those of her favorite episodes. One was "PK Tech Girl," directed by Tony Tilse. "I just asked Tony, 'Can I try this? Can I do this? Can I give this a go?' He'd say, 'Okay.' I said, 'If you hate it, I'll throw it out, I promise. I won't nag again. I just want to see if I can give it a go.' The moments that I have enjoyed most are the times that I asked the directors if I could try something. I usually don't sit down and enjoy [watching] my performances — I watch them to improve technically but the moments that I have actually been able to kick back and enjoy are the ones like in episode seven, when Aeryn is doing the Arnold Schwarzenegger thing of lifting heavy objects. 'Sorry



A MATCH MADE IN HELL: Captain Crais' seemingly capricious denunciation of Aeryn actually conceals more personal motives.

about the mess,' was the original line in the script, and Tony said, 'I'm not sure about it. We don't want to overplay this.' I said, 'Oh, come on. It's very Arnold Schwarzenegger. Let's give it a go.' That's the beauty of the directors like Tony, Rowan, or Ian: They are open to it. I also loved 'A Human Reaction' from season one. That was another opportunity to play."

In the original version of "A Human Reaction," Aeryn and Crichton definitely slept together, something that was lost in edit. Laughed Black, "In my mind, and in Ben's mind, Crichton and Aeryn have been doing it all along — for so long that they just can't come to terms with it. We really wanted to have it that when Aeryn and Crichton were in the cell together in the first episode, after she beats him up, they actually do it, and then are incredibly embarrassed. That sort of sets the path to them of being dysfunctional together as lovers."

Aeryn may have also had a relationship of some type with Crais, something that the two actors set up and that then found its way into future scripts. Said Black, "There's a huge history between Aeryn and Crais. Lani and I decided we wanted to play around and have a bit of fun. In the first episode — in the scene with Aeryn, Crichton, and Crais — when Crais says, 'I'll enjoy taking you apart to see what you are made of,' Lani said, 'I reckon we've done it.' I said, 'Maybe I've been trying to get a promotion and we've done it.' Lani said, 'Yes, let's raise the stakes, let's make it a more personal attachment, whether we've done it or not.'

"I said, 'Well, if we haven't done it, if we aren't that specific, I think Crais prob-

ably wants to. Aeryn has been keeping him at bay, but desperate for a promotion and trying to work out how to play it.' So when Crichton comes into the picture and he sees that she is willing to save his life and stand up for him, Crais becomes a lot more antagonistic than you would expect. His need to go deeper and deeper into the *Uncharted Territories* to keep pursuing Crichton is perhaps, as far as Lani and I are concerned, a lot more personal than just the death of his brother. We are constantly trying to find those layers, so that we can spread the show out sideways and keep pushing to a different crowd. You do see it in episode seven, which is probably my favorite of all the episodes in season two."

In the final episode of Season Two, Aeryn dies. It was a difficult scene to shoot for Black, much of it underwater. "I was on the gimball all morning being spun around," she said, "and then, in the afternoon through to the evening, I was being plunged underwater doing tank stuff. It's some of the best stuff — I really surprise myself, because I wouldn't have thought I was capable of doing those things. Those little challenges that *FARSCAPE* provides in every episode are really good for the confidence. The Dalai Lama says, 'Go to a place once a year that you have never been to before.' I would add to that: Definitely travel, and definitely do something that you are afraid of. Jump out of a plane, rappel-jump off the side of a building, go rollerblading for the first time. Do things that freak you out. If there is an element of fear, and you can accomplish just the smallest part of that task, it does wonders. It really, really does." □



Touched by love: Sebaceans are turned into statues to observe affairs of state; Swiftian political theory from "A Kiss is But a Kiss."

he had received a pitch from a writer who had ideas about a fairy-tale kind of FARSCAPE. The two concepts came together. Said Kemper, "Initially it came from this desire to show a different kind of ruling succession. Then, of course, Crichton's got to be the prince, and that means he's got to get married. Along the way it kept unfolding. If he's going to get married, then our show, we're tougher: Let the girl be pregnant. Off we went. Slowly but surely I was building this mythology.

"We realized that we had a lot of extra footage, just because of the way the thing got shot, the crowd scenes, things that weren't ever to be seen by the audience. But we'd been spending money like drunken sailors. We were running out, and I realized that somewhere along the way we were going to have to have a really cheap episode to compensate for all the lost money. I said, 'How much extra footage do we have, and how much more would we have to shoot?' If we could shoot maybe five days instead of ten, and use the footage that we already had, then we could build another episode. It took forever. I had to break the edited piece apart onto file cards, so that I had every scene on a file card. Then I had to reorganize the two-parter into a three-parter, and shoot scenes to fill in the gaps. There are five or six or seven scenes in the first hour that didn't exist, that we shot later. There are about six scenes in the last hour that didn't exist. I re-engineered the act breaks, and we shot little pieces of things, shot moments for people, and then reedited. Scenes that would be ordered 1, 2, 3, now went 1, 3, 2, or even, 3, 1, 2. We re-told the story in editing, which is what you can do in editing, anyway. But this one was really crazed because I had to do it in about a week, and then I had to write about forty pages."

"Aeryn, is there a way off this planet? Have you convinced Scorpius to stop chasing me? The Empress, is she no longer intent on her daughter being heir to the throne?"

—Crichton

"Those are not good reasons for getting married."

—Aeryn

PART II: I DO, I THINK

★★★★

Production # 10221. Airdate 7/28/2000. Written by David Kemper. Directed by Andrew Prowse and Tony Tilse.

The first attempt on Crichton's life is stopped by the Prince's fiancée, who turns out to be a Peacekeeper super-spy named Jena. Then a supposedly loyal ro-NA (Francesca Buller, Browder's wife) sells him out to Scorpius. Behind the scenes, Rygel is negotiating with the Empress, D'Argo and Chiana are having a great time, and Aeryn won't tell Crichton how she feels. Moya has been attracted by a familiar signal. She has found her builders, her gods. One, Kahaynu (Jonathan Hardy), sits in judgement and decommissions

of it at the time. Can we put it in now? We said, 'Sure. Why not?' That's the hard thing, to keep a villain interesting, and not make him really stupid. But if you actually make a plot point that he has put something into Crichton to get the information that he wants, and the thing has got to burrow its way into his brain and that takes time, then he's not as stupid. He can be around. But that idea that the chip was in Crichton's head, put in by Scorpius, I wasn't aware of that until about episode five of season two."

The chip also helped Crichton stay alive on numerous occasions, in episodes such as "Won't Get Fooled Again," and "A Clockwork Nebari." It prevented him from killing Scorpius when he had the chance in the last part of the "Look At The Princess" trilogy. Although the audience only learned about the chip in "Won't Get Fooled Again," John had been hearing voices, seeing visions, and manifesting psychotic behavior for a number of episodes. Said Browder about the audience, "They know that it's coming. They've already spotted it coming. We started seeding that stuff. I think that's where David figured out how it was going to end."

Kemper developed the chip as a way to get to the end of the season. He explained, "The idea always is to have something good for a season ender. The first season was about Crichton becoming acclimated to his environment. The second season was about him being the unwitting victim of Scorpius. The audience's first inkling of it is in ep. five, and they don't figure it out until ep.

LIVING THE FUTURE: John, Aeryn, and their granddaughter meet. Aging prosthetics by Henson Creature Shop.



fourteen. Once we totally knew that there was a chip in his head, we were shooting Episode three, maybe four. I don't like to know the last four eps until I have to do them. I said, 'There's a chip in his head, and what we are leading to is the chip coming out. Along the way, we want to start building things in, so that the audience will begin to ask questions.'

"So we started to think that way, and build it in without knowing where we were going. I just knew that at some point I would get to the end of the year and write an episode where we took the chip out. We rewrote and rewrote as we went, to make sure that the [penultimate episode] ended with Crichton being a blithering idiot, and you couldn't play another episode with the chip in. The key is you tell everybody. You tell the directors, you tell the actors, and most importantly, in this, case you tell Ben: 'Here's where we are going. You've got to help me with your performance so that through the course of the last six episodes you become increasingly more out of it and increasingly more insane. We will put voices in your head and we'll make it crazed.'"

Season two became the season in which John Crichton was driven crazy by the chip in his head, a neat way, in turn, to physically manifest the insanity of an ordinary person lost in the wrong part of the universe. Said director Rowan Woods, "I just love that particular story arc. In series two, it manifests itself in the most extraordinary situations and gags for our characters. The big reason why I am on the show and the thing that really excites me about FARSCAPE, going back to the very beginning, is that you have a very, very simple, original spin on a guy that's lost in space, but in this case he's a contemporary Gen-X'er. He sees things in space, and encounters situations in space, and he doesn't really have any reference points except to planet Earth—the sort of reference points that we all have. Come series two, when Scorpius comes into the arc, you don't just have the cool and funny references of series one. You also have a contemporary guy who is being psychologically tortured in the most



TIME FLIES: A lifetime is lived in a moment in "The Locket." The moody, lyrical episode delves deeply into emotions that the series had otherwise been avoiding.

real, plausible sense.

"That's where *FARSCAPE* connects to a contemporary audience. It's going almost into one of the more interesting aspects of *THE SOPRANOS*: the psychological disturbance that individuals experience when they are infected by a bad and evil being. That's where our show becomes very, very interesting and exciting and disturbing, and it will continue that way. It represents not the normal, 'cat and mouse' challenges to our central hero, the normal to-ings and fro-ings of aliens on and off the ship, but internal, psychological challenges, and levels of interference that are within his head. It becomes a much more complicated and much richer, psychological struggle. Extending upon what was a really interesting original premise on a sci-fi adventure—John Crichton, Gen X'er in space—series two, without even the fans being aware of it in the first half of the season, is shifted into this psychologically rich, disturbing place where the main character doesn't just have to contend with external factors that are thrown at him from every direction, but internal factors, internal disturbances."

All this means that Ben Browder has turned in an incredible performance during Season Two. Said Monjo, "That's the thing about Ben. The range that Ben is being forced to play, I don't know of any other science fiction captain that has to do that. It's stunning. It's more than I have ever seen. You are forcing your actors to take huge risks, huge risks. They pull it off every time."

Added Andrew Prowse, "Ben's become a master in the two series. He's absolutely indispensable to the show in many, many ways—not only as the lead actor, but as creative lead, and he's fabulous. He really commits to the show."

Kemper also spoke of the risks taken in every area: "I know something is good when it scares us. We were afraid of ep. five of the second year, we were afraid of ep. nine, we were afraid to cut Pilot's arm off, we were afraid to autopsy Rygel. We were afraid of so many things, and every time we are afraid, that's when we know we've got to do it. I tell everyone, 'If it scares us, it's going to be good, for two reasons: It's going to surprise the audience; and, more importantly, we are going to be so afraid of it that we are going to make it good.' When you are complacent and you go, 'I've seen this story before. This is easy,' the audience has seen it too. So when we are terrified, we do our best work. Sometimes we fall on our face, but we should take these risks."

This also means the show has veered wildly in tone, from episode to episode, season to season. Noted Browder, "The audience that stays with us realizes that every week they are going to get something different. The week after they got 'Crackers Don't Matter,' this insane romp with some really nasty moments in it, they got 'The Way We Weren't,' a piece with no jokes, a drama about a girl and her puppet which is a very sad, dark piece. Yet the drama plays and holds as one of our best episodes."

Added Kemper, "You bounce back and forth. In the second year, you have this real-

Moya because she gave birth to a gunship. On the royal planet, Crichton eventually gives up, marries the Princess, and gets turned into a statue.

Said Kemper, "Then, of course, there is the surprise of the female James Bond character, who rescues Crichton when he needs it. I always like to have a surprise start the next hour, as opposed to just finishing up, cleaning up business. And when I thought of the chambermaid, we didn't have a lot of time, so I had to call the makeup people, I had to call the costume, the wardrobe people, and say, 'Here's what I am going to do.' They said, 'We only have a week.' I called Fran and asked her if she wanted to play this part, and she said, 'Sure.' I wrote the part directly for her. I knew what I could do, and I knew how smart I could make the character, because Fran would bring it to the screen. Fran was cast before I wrote a word of it. Then I wrote it for her."

In the middle of this episode is the famous Jakench cockpit sequence, in which Crichton escapes from ro-NA, Braca (David Franklin), and the entire orbital firepower of the royal planet by jumping out of a space ship. The Jakench cockpit sequence accomplished another goal. The middle episode of this trilogy was filmed later in the season. At that point, Crichton was already going crazy because of the Scorpius clone in his head. But there were episodes in between in which he really wasn't showing the demented behavior. Since they got to film more scenes for "Look At The Princess," Kemper and Browder decided to give the audience a taste of Crichton's madness. Said Kemper, "I'll construct a situation that will excuse the madness. I'll construct a situation where if Crichton goes a little bit mad, people could understand it." If he was just having a sandwich and went as crazy as he did in the Jakench cockpit, we'd have a problem. The audience would be going, 'This isn't right.' But they bought it because, he's been beat up, and he's up in a ship, so the audience allowed for Crichton to act that bizarrely."

"You'll never get Crichton. He'll die first."

—D'Argo

"You underestimate the strength of a relationship even your friend does not yet understand."

—Scorpius

PART III: THE MALTESE CRICHTON

★★★

Production #10211. Airdate 8/4/2000. Written by David Kemper. Directed by Andrew Prowse and Tony Tilse.

Crichton and the Princess are statues, but they can see and hear. The Scarran cuts off Crichton's head, but before he is able to destroy it in an acid bath, Scorpius steals it. Jena saves Crichton again by getting his head from Scorpius and using the statue technology to reattach it and reanimate him. In the process, she learns Crichton's story. As they are escaping, the Empress is determined to find the culprit, holding all off-worlders to blame and threatening execution. Scorpius is trapped, along with Crichton's friends. When Crichton finally reappears, he sets everything right.

Said Kemper, "The whole idea is that Scorpius is totally in charge. If you look at the very end of the three-parter, when he puts his hand in the acid bath, he wasn't even worried. Everything was to test the chip. He would have loved to get Crichton if he could, but knowing he couldn't get Crichton at that time because of the security and the Princess and all that, at least he knew that the chip was working: Crichton couldn't kill him, and eventually Crichton would come to him. That's what Scorpius knew."

"There was lots of funny stuff, because the situation at first looks benign. It's like, 'I'm down here on this planet, I'm kissing all these pretty women, and now they are telling me I've got to marry one. Oh come on—this is so dumb.' Then of course it gets darker and darker and darker as you

go. It gets uglier and uglier. Poor Crichton, every time he thinks he can get out of something, it gets worse."

"Aeryn, don't worry. I'm not going to lose my mind. It's all I've got left. —Crichton

BEWARE OF DOG ★★★

Production #10213. Airdate 8/11/2000. Written by Naren Shankar. Directed by Tony Tilse.

After visiting a planet to obtain provisions, Chiana and D'Argo come back to Moya with a problem: There is a local rumor that goods can be contaminated by a parasite which kills entire crews. They have brought on board an animal called a Vorc, which is said to be able to find and eliminate the parasite. It doesn't look like it is going to do anything except eat and eliminate and bite. While Chiana and D'Argo chase the Vorc, Crichton starts to see Scorpius, as well as some other creature that no one believes exists until it attacks and poisons D'Argo. Aeryn, John and the Vorc try to hunt down the beast and solve the mystery.

Said writer Naren Shankar, "It was one of the oddest production experiences I have ever had. Every series you are on, every season you are on, there is going to be an episode where the dominos just fall wrong. There's nothing you can do about it. I figure it's the nature of television. It doesn't stop. You can't wait to get things perfect. If everything doesn't go exactly right, and one thing affects the other, pretty soon you are in a situation where you are simply just flying by the seat of your pants and improvising like crazy. For a number of reasons, this show ended up being like that. Everybody really pulled together really well to turn it into a fun episode. Tony Tilse, the director, did a really great job, and the Creature Shop pulled together really hard. There were a lot of issues with it, and the end result is a fun monster. What's really fun about the episode is that this is one of those times where you get to see Crichton and Aeryn working as a team. It's really nice because Ben and Claudia have such good chemistry and their rhythm is so good. I think you realize halfway through that you are looking at a buddy movie, like LETHAL WEAPON, and it's just fun seeing the two of them work together."

"I am some alien's personal science project." —Crichton

WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN ★★★★★

Production #10214. Airdate 8/18/2000. Written by Richard Manning. Directed by Rowan Woods.

Crichton's Farscape module separates from the space shuttle. Just as he is about to do his slingshot maneuver, he is told to abort. A wormhole briefly opens, then he blacks out and awakens in a hospital room with his father (Kent McCord). But Crichton is not about to be fooled again, as he did when the Ancients made him believe he was back on Earth. Even though things seem perfect at the beginning, every detail starts to unravel as he sees his alien friends in human costume. Aeryn says she is Dr. Bettina Fairchild. D'Argo is another pilot; Zhaan is a psychiatrist. Crichton won't go along with it, but he doesn't know what to do. It is up to Scorpius to explain it to him.

See "The Making of 'Won't Get Fooled Again.'"

"I'd forgotten how beautiful you were. You're so young." —Aeryn to John.

THE LOCKET ★★★

Production #10215. Airdate 8/25/2000. Written by Justin Monjo. Directed by Ian Watson.

Before Moya enters a mist, Aeryn goes ahead in a transport module to make sure it is safe. She disappears, and when they finally find her, she

ly serious show with Aeryn discovering the past. Then you go to 'Home On The Remains' which is really dark. Then you go to body switching and Crichton peeing in the hallway. That's what I love. They are all FARSCAPES, but you never know what you are going to get next week. 'Won't Get Fooled Again.' What the hell is that? It's not like, 'I know what's going to happen.' People just don't have a clue what's coming next because we don't have a clue. I leave it wide open."

The people working on FARSCAPE are generous with their praise for each other. Said Kemper about regular directors Tony Tilse, Rowan Woods, Ian Watson and Andrew Prowse, "They are all great. They all do everything, and they all have their strengths. My nickname and other people's nickname for Tony Tilse is Tony Woo. Tony makes roller-coasters. Rowan creates these incredible worlds and then brings a great story to them. Rowan has made some features, and he comes from the feature world, so he tends to look big. Ian Watson gets inside people's heads, the actors, and the characters—he finds out what makes characters tick. Ian came from the theater, and so what he's used to and what he really loves to do is to get into people's heads. Andrew usually tells these incredible, unremitting stories—they just move forward.

"A lot of times, we'll have a script that obviously is Tony, or obviously is Ian, or obviously is Rowan. Sometimes we will give them that script. You want to give them two right up their alley each year, so they can go, 'I know exactly what to do and this is going to be phenomenal.' Then we search

for places to throw them curve balls. Something really feels like an 'Ian' ep, and we'll give it to Rowan. This one feels like a 'Rowan' ep; we'll give it to Andrew. They want that. It's funny, because they want it all. They want to do the ones that are right in their alley, and then they want to do ones that are not in their alley. We look for ways to accommodate them at every turn."

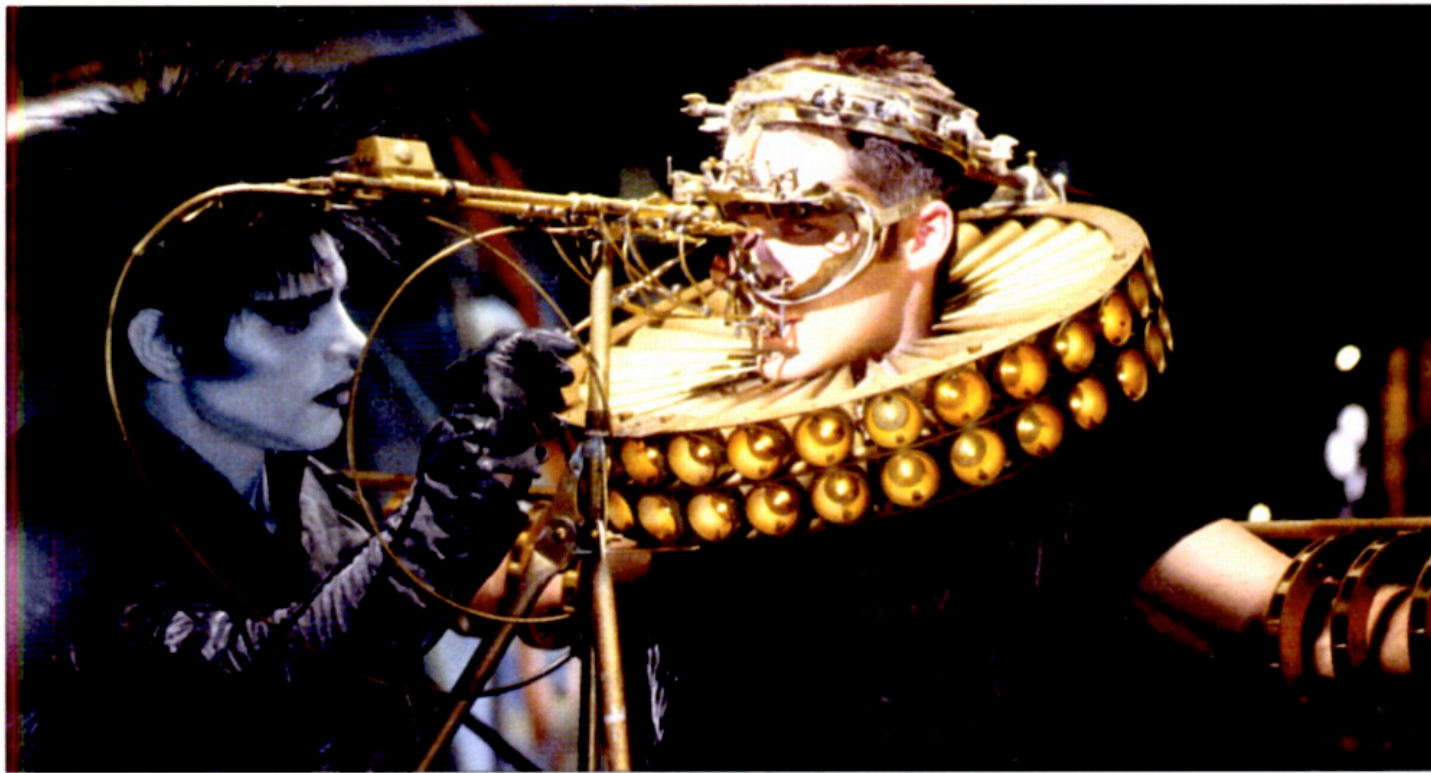
As season two came to a close, each of the regular directors did their last episodes, with Rowan Woods getting the finale. "Die Dichotomy," by David Kemper, was another incredible cliffhanger. Crichton essentially turns into Scorpius, and his friends realize they have to get the chip out of his head. By the time the hour is over, the chip is out, along with part of Crichton's brain, and Aeryn is dead.

Said Kemper, "When I started writing the script for ep. 22, Aeryn [Claudia Black] didn't die she shot Crichton [Ben Browder] down. As I was writing it I was thinking, This is really good, but it's what you expect to happen. I looked at it, and I called up Ben and I said, 'I just wrote this scene where Aeryn shoots Crichton down.' He goes, 'Yeah? How did it go?' I said, 'It's a great scene, but from the very beginning of the whole sequence you know Aeryn is going to shoot Crichton down. Crichton is in an unarmed module, and Aeryn is flying a weapons ship. She's a fighter pilot, there is no way she can do anything but shoot Crichton down. So I rewrote it and he got her.' Ben goes, 'How?' I said, 'It's a surprise.'

"How can anyone have predicted that? It wasn't in the outline. When the people read

FALLEN STAR?: Zhaan and Crais gather at the coffin for the for the deceased Aeryn, the shocking conclusion to a second season with no shortage of shocks.





THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY: When Moya is boarded by the Nebari, Meelak (Malcolm Kennard, above), more of Chiana's past is revealed. Having been fodder for Scorpius' torturous Aurora Chair, Stark (below) seeks his revenge at the end of season two.

it, the people on the show, they didn't know it was coming. We adjust and adapt as we go. People have to be flexible and fluid."

As to Crichton's involuntary lobotomy, Justin Monjo recalled, "By the end of season two, our hero looks in the mirror and instead of seeing just himself, he sees himself in the Scorpius makeup, the Scorpius look, Scorpie's outfit. It's very creepy, because you can just tell it's Ben, with all the [prosthetic] pieces on him. That's good."

"Crichton gets a big section of his brain removed. To get the chip out of Crichton's brain they have to take some of the surrounding brain tissue, so they have like this alien apple-corer that they shove in. Then at

the end of Season Two Scorpius steals it. That's our cliff-hanger. What part of Crichton will come back? Even we don't know yet. We're making it up right now."

David Kemper commented on how the feelings of a series' creators feel are often reflected in the last episode: "When you get to the end, there is an emotional aspect to it. You made it through, and all the trials and tribulations that you shared as a family are over. It's the last couple of days, and you're playing a death scene with one of your main characters, and everyone has to act sad. What happens is that you bring it all to the table: All of a sudden, people were really crying. That just works. Then, when you get to the end and you see the film, it's something special. The actors brought all of this emotion with them to the table, emotion that you wouldn't get normally. We were very fortunate. That last episode works very well. It certainly shook people up."

SEASON THREE: MORE ROASTING FOR THE COUCH POTATOES

FARSCAPE continued to perform well on the Sci-Fi Channel throughout its second season, ensuring a third. Actors joked about their options being picked up after the finale. Production designers talked about making Talyn, Moya's baby, into a bigger ship, and costumers were excited that the riches the group acquired at the end of the year would mean new wardrobes for some of the cast. The core group of writers for season three, led by executive producer David Kemper, would include executive producer Richard Manning, writer and creative consultant Justin Monjo, series creator and executive consultant Rockne S. O'Bannon, and possibly a few new writers.

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has aged 165 cycles. A newly returned Stark (Paul Goddard) helps make sense of this time conundrum, as well as bringing the information that D'Argo's son is going to be sold into slavery.

Said Monjo, "They are in a cloud, in a mist, and Aeryn is missing. They get a radio signal, and Aeryn goes, 'I'll be there in a second.' She doesn't come out of the transport pod. They find her, and she's an old woman. She says, 'I've been waiting for you to come back. You've been gone for so long.' They say, 'We've only been gone for two days.' She says, 'No, I've lived a whole life and had three sons, and they died. I've been married.' She escapes, and she runs back down to the planet, and Crichton goes after her. He gets down, and it's this terrible, harsh planet, and he says, 'Look, you see? You couldn't have been down here.' All of a sudden there is a shot behind him, and a young woman [Allyson Standen] comes forward and says, 'Don't you touch my grandmother.' That's the setup."

"After the demented stuff we've done, I felt that we needed to have a true, emotional, jeopardy show in a really simple, old-fashioned way. That's what I went to write. I gave it an old-fashioned title, nothing funny. Our fans might think it is slow. I think it's necessary. I just saw it once in the director's cut, but I think it had to be re-edited because there were some concerns about it being slow."

Said Watson, "It's a lovely, lyrical, poetical, old-fashioned love story. It has some fantastic work from both Ben and Claudia. We did prosthetics for the aging makeup, and they look totally authentic. Dave Elsey, at The Creature Shop, did it again."

"Despite my best efforts, Talyn is becoming more aggressive, more destructive. You must help me disarm him."

—Crais

THE UGLY TRUTH

★★★

Production #10216. Airdate 9/8/2000. Written by Gabrielle Stanton and Harry Werksman, Jr. Directed by Tony Tilse.

Crais asks for help with Talyn—he wishes to trade the gunship's cannon for a defensive dampening net. Aeryn, Crichton, Zhaan, D'Argo, and Stark go over to Talyn to discuss this. As the crew argue about the Plokavians who are to supply the net, the alien's ship appears and Talyn destroys it. Crais gets away with Talyn, but the group, while trying to return to Moya, gets picked up and interrogated by the Plokavians, who insist that there is a true guilty party who must be punished by dispersal.

What follows is an exploration of the way in which each of the participants viewed the incident. Said David Kemper, "'The Ugly Truth' was our twisted, messed-up, psychological version of RASHOMON. Everyone does a RASHOMON show. We wanted to do it our way, and have bizarre things going on."

Laughed Gigi Edgley, "You hear a story in five different ways, and how different characters interpret it. I stayed on the ship with Ryg. But I went in and watched some of the filming. It was the exact same script, but with a couple of alterations as different people saw the story. They called it GROUNDHOG DAY, because they were just doing it over and over again, on the same set, same lighting, same camera setup. After awhile, I went, 'I think I'm glad I'm not working on that set.'"

"Your brother is alive. He's alive. Take that—it's more than you had yesterday."

—Crichton to Chiana

A CLOCKWORK NEBARI

★★★

Production #10217. Airdate 9/15/2000. Written by Lily Taylor. Directed by Rowan Woods.

While visiting a planet to get information about D'Argo's son, Chiana attracts attention.



FARSCAPE

Lani John Tupu

Captain Crais may be amongst the most indomitable pursuer of the Moya crew, but does his madness conceal a method?

By Anna L. Kaplan

Captain Crais hardly laughs. Pilot never does. But Lani John Tupu, who plays both FARSCAPE's Bialar Crais and the voice of Pilot, laughs easily and frequently. But put to the question, he *will* talk seriously about the show.

Tupu was auditioning against Anthony Simcoe for the part of D'Argo, but got Crais instead. Once he'd won the role, he

they never know where he's coming from. I have hopefully created a really three-dimensional character. There is great depth. You are constantly wondering what he is up to, where he is coming from, and what he is going to do next. This is not just a cardboard character, or a caricature of a so-called villain.

"One of the things I really love about Crais is his unpredictability. You never know where he is coming from. I really

relationship between Crichton and myself, and number eight ['That Old Black Magic'], where we confront each other, and I break my lieutenant's neck. In the first season, the latter part where I meet Scorpius, the storylines in those four episodes I really love. It's fantastic working with Wayne Pygram. And there are moments in there when I am working with Rygel, right at the end — I really enjoy working with Rygel. Then resolving — or not resolving — where I am with Crichton in 22 ['Family Ties'], where we sit in the jail-like part of Moya. Just sitting talking to Crichton, I really loved that great, quiet scene."

Crais' reaction to his brother's death in the first episode was given context by his turn in Scorpius' Aurora Chair, where it was revealed that Crais and his brother were conscripted by the Peacekeepers and Crais promised to look after his sibling. Said Tupu, "One of the themes I was working on was his guilt. If you look back to the end of 22, he says to Crichton that he realized that in the pursuit of his ambition he neglected his duties to his brother. I think that's the whole key to that episode, and, I think, to who he is as well. He realizes what he should have done, but in the pursuit of his own career, he took his eye off the ball with his brother."

FARSCAPE's Peacekeepers are not meant to be supposed to consider family or emotional attachments. Agreed Tupu, "They are not meant to be emotional on any level. So there is a complexity where Crais has to present this front to whomever he is in command of, as I think most people do in positions of authority, especially where warfare is concerned. You have to present the impression that you are totally all together. No one must ever see the vulnerable side of you. If they do, then they would question your authority, and that would be the end of that. So he is always on every

SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL: In the moral grey-area of FARSCAPE's universe, Crais' motivations are surprisingly complex.

was determined to make Crais as believable as possible. Recalled Tupu, "I made a pact with myself not to make him a one-dimensional character. I think it's exciting for an audience on any level, in any story that they watch, if they have a villain where

love working with that element — I made it a real choice in my work with Crais."

Recalling his favorite episodes from season one, Tupu said, "I really liked the introductory story where we set up the re-

one else's case."

A different side to Crais can be seen in his apparent interest in Aeryn. Both Tupu and Claudia Black say that they decided this was the case when filming the first episode. The writers took it further from there. Said Tupu, "If you go back to number one, in the setup, I worked out something with Claudia right up front. It's where I actually see Crichton for the first time: I am circling him, and I go back to Aeryn and I ask her, 'How much do you know of this man? How much do you know?'"

"I said to her, 'Wouldn't it be interesting if we just planted the seed that Crais might have had designs on Aeryn, and they don't surface until way down the track?' We mentioned it to the writers and also the directors, and they have included that. Just go back to the first set up in the premiere, and it's all there. I am very pleased that that occurred. I could just foresee that it could be an opportunity for the writers further down the track to pick up on that, and they have."

Tupu laughed, "Mind you, they might have been thinking about that from the beginning anyway."

This attachment was viewed in a different light during Season Two's "The Way We Weren't." Noted Tupu, "Then, you get the beginning of Aeryn, where Aeryn is, and just that one moment where Crais comes in and disturbs them, and Velorek leaves. Crais is standing there looking at Aeryn. There are lovely, subtle elements there."

In that episode, viewers saw Pilot making a deliberate choice to be taken on board Moya, and they saw Crais interact briefly with Pilot. In fact, Tupu provides the voice for Pilot, in addition to playing Crais — a fact that startles some viewers. Said Tupu, "It's amazing to me as well. When I was offered the role of Crais, I didn't fully understand who he was. A couple of days later I was asked to go and test for Pilot. Everybody came into the room, into the sound recording studios at Fox Studios, and I just played around with him. They said, 'Play him like an harassed accountant.' That's how I got to Pilot's head space, that he was multifunctional and could do 1001 things at once. The character of Pilot grew over the first part of the season for me, but I must also add that it wasn't until I did the story where you saw where he came from, where you saw him making the decision, that I really understood who Pilot was. Up until that point it could be read that Pilot is just an innocent character who happens to be bonded to this amazing ship, who just wants to navigate around the universe. But he is an adventurer, like everyone else on Moya. He actually made choices; he is not innocent of anything. That took it to another level for me, with Pilot."

Tupu sees some similarities between the two characters. He said, "I think that, with both characters, I work at both ends of the spectrum in terms of where they are coming from. In a funny way, what I like with Crais and Pilot is that they are both pure, absolutely pure sources. Crais, even though he has his ways and is misunderstood, is a pure spirit in a way, as is Pilot, even though they both come from different ends of the spectrum in the way they'll actually make their choices about a situation. I really love that element in them."

They are different enough that when Tupu to add Pilot's voice in ADR and also needs to re-record Crais' dialogue as well, he cannot easily switch between the personas. He explained, "If I am doing Crais and Pilot in a recording studio, on any one day, I've just got to concentrate on either doing Pilot first, and then Crais, or the other way around. I can't do three or four lines of Crais and then go do Pilot. It's schizophrenic enough."

Tupu loves working on FARSCAPE. "It's liberating. There's an element we have of creativity when we are working as actors, and the directors are wonderful in that they really leave it up to us as to how to play a scene. That enables me to go to places that I wouldn't normally go to."

"We are having so much fun working on the series. All the storylines are so, so exciting to work on. The character development and story arc for each character is really in-depth, it gives us great material to work with. The writers are just crazy, [writing] wonderful, wonderful weird and quirky storylines. Maybe because we are not filming it in the States, there is a certain refreshing element outside of the formula that's there. Perhaps that's one of the pluses. Series Two is just incredible:



ASK QUESTIONS LATER: Then again, sometimes moral relativism has nothing to do with who will live to see the next day.

Very funny stories, and a great element of drama in it. If I was trying to explain it to somebody who hasn't seen the show, I'd suggest putting the idea that it's a sci-fi genre aside. What you are dealing with is characters, and the interaction between the characters that you could get on LA LAW, THE PRACTICE, any of the major dramas. We are sometimes doing that on the show — it's the ability to create drama."

Tupu, an accomplished actor and director who was educated in New Zealand, has appeared in many stage productions, television roles, and feature films — American audiences might have seen him in FLIPPER 2, TIME TRAX, or MISSION IMPOSSIBLE. He looks forward to season three of FARSCAPE: "We are working on storylines now. We spoke to David Kemper yesterday, and he has some great ideas for the third season. We will sit down with him, each individual character, and just go through the story arc for the third season." □

When Aeryn and Rygel return to Moya, they have been mind-cleansed, and have brought along two Nebari—Varla (Skye Wansley) and Meelak (Malcolm Kennard)—who want one thing: Chiana. They put obedience collars on everyone, including Pilot, chain up Chiana, and proceed to mind-cleanse the crew. In the end, Chiana admits that she and her brother, Nerri (Simon Bossell), were unwittingly part of a Nebari scheme to take over the galaxy. Nerri is still alive, and fighting in the resistance.

The funniest thing in Lily Taylor's first script for *FARSCAPE* was Ben Browder's interpretation of what a mind-cleansed human's behavior—his trippy, surfer dude—is not to be missed. The audience also learns more about the Nebari.

Said Edgley, "It was really tricky doing the episode. Sometimes you get guest cast on, and it's a very tricky to just come on and learn, momentarily, how to work with the animatronics. Lots of interesting challenges arose, but we got through the episode okay. There are some eps. that you just sort of hold on tight and hope it comes out right on the other end. When it's one of your character eps, you hope that it gets pulled off okay."

"Aeryn, I have to tell you how I feel."

—Crichton

LIARS, GUNS, AND MONEY, PART I: A NOT SO SIMPLE PLAN ★★1/2

Production #10218. Airdate 1/5/2001. Written by Grant McAloon. Directed by Andrew Prowse.

A re-corporealized Stark comes up with a plan: Since D'Argo's son Jothee is to be sold in a lot of 10,000 slaves, they will need a lot of money to buy his freedom. Stark proposes robbing a shadow bank, where criminals deposit their booty. No one is sure about this, but D'Argo tries the raid and gets caught. This forces John and Aeryn to go down to help him. John is hallucinating Scorpius all the time, now, but when the real Scorpius turns out to be at the bank, all hell breaks loose for everyone. It turns out that Scorpius' old lover, Natira (Claudia Karvan), runs the bank, and will help him trap Crichton.

Three different writers and directors handled this three-parter.

"Like it or not, Scorpie, I know how you think... We're sharing now, and that's how I am going to beat you."

—Crichton

LIARS, GUNS, AND MONEY, PART II: WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE ★★1/2

Production #10219. Airdate 1/12/2001. Written by Naren Shankar. Directed by Catherine Millar.

D'Argo discovers that Jothee (Matt Newton) has already been sold—Scorpius has him at the bank, and will let him go in exchange for Crichton. Crichton, who is still unable to kill Scorpius even given ample opportunity, comes up with a plan to get back into the depository: He proposes getting old enemies to come help them, in exchange for monetary compensation. They don't realize until later that the "money" they stole is really alive. As Crichton looks for a Tavlek, D'Argo finds the blood tracking Rorf (Jeremy Sims), Aeryn gets a Sheyang, Rygel finds Zenetan pirates. Meanwhile, Zhaan has to find a way to kill thousands of living metal parasites.

Said Millar, "It was based on *THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN*, where they go out and gather all their old enemies as mercenaries, and bring them all back to fight. There was quite a lot of strong emotional stuff—the scene between Jothee and D'Argo where they first meet up again after twenty years was sensational, because Jothee had been mutilated while he'd been enslaved.

"The ongoing relationship between Scorpius and Crichton is moving to a crunch point in the

Said Monjo, "We all sort of know a bit more about what we can do. We know our space and we know our actors. But at the end of this year, our crew had grown to a very large size. We have to figure out a way to use them all."

While literally putting season two into boxes—packing away tapes, scripts, DVD prototypes and other second season material for storage—David Kemper talked about *FARSCAPE*'s third season: "Expect the unexpected. Expect to be thrilled, expect to be elated, expect to be disappointed, expect to run through a whole range of emotions. As soon as our audience starts to think that they know what we are going to do, that's when they are the most vulnerable. The more are fans think they understand us, the more disappointed they are going to be. The true *FARSCAPE* fan has joined us for a roller coaster ride and knows to expect the unexpected. We quite often leave the show fluid; we leave the show deliberately open to improvisation. We look, actively, for things that surprise us. If they surprise the people who live with this show every day, imagine what they are going to do to the viewer."

Kemper added a caution for fans tracking online rumors: "The only truth that exists on *FARSCAPE* comes out of our office. All the stuff that gets published out there, outside of us, is just speculation. If people choose to believe that speculation, and start to get their hopes up based on speculation, that's like buying a stock because you heard something. You are going to be disappoint-

“We want *FARSCAPE* to be like a surprise present. You like what we've done so far, why would you assume you won't like it in the future?”

—David Kemper on fan uneasiness —

ed when it doesn't do what you were told. The people you are getting your information from don't know what the real information is. It's not a slam against them—sometimes we don't know. We purposely let things float and slide, then we go, 'Everyone expects this. Now we are going to give them that.' When that happens, the fans should be ready to deal

with it. They should be ready to deal with pain, and they should be ready to deal with loss, and they should be ready to deal with joy.

"I have always said that this show should reflect real life, and in real life, people that you love go away. They move away; they run away; they die; they get sick; they don't care for you anymore. People that you love desperately don't return your affection. People that you would die to be friends with don't want to have anything to do with you. That's real life.

"We are a devious and tricky lot. We are trying to make a show, first and foremost, that we like. From the very beginning, Rockne wanted to do something that he would enjoy watching. Ricky, Justin and I are making something that we would want to watch. We are trying to satisfy ourselves, keep ourselves interested, focused. So when we make a script, the first things out of our mouths are, 'What do we want to do?' We never say, 'What do you think the audience wants us to do?' The people that we have, from Rockne on down, their instincts are correct; we have proven it.

"We don't know sometimes where we

Breaking up the team: Having formed an alliance seemingly stronger than death itself, the Moya crew found itself seriously shaken at the end of season two. Only the series return in March will provide the answers.





The long kiss goodbye: Crichton, fully possessed by the Scorpius implant, unsettles crewmates and viewers with his transition. Shocking events leading to a shattering season climax.

are going. That's the beauty of FARSCAPE: It keeps us loose. The fans need to embrace our process, a process that includes the actors and the directors, that incorporates lot of great ideas from our props people and our special effects people and our designers. We get great ideas from everywhere, and you don't know where they are going to come from. Right now we are working on some shows, and someone in the prop department is going to read an outline of our script and call—this happened last year—and say, 'I've got a great idea: I am looking at this thing where you are calling for this kind of weapon. What if I did this and made it this?' We'll go, 'That's great,' and we re-write the script to accommodate that. There is no way to predict it."

When asked for specifics on the upcoming season, Kemper demurred: "Season three will have some multi-part arcs for sure; at the very least a two-parter and a three-parter. There will be a thread that runs through this thing that will have people scratching their heads and going, 'How can they do that? How can they get away with that?' What I want to do is do something that other shows don't do. We are going to do something with our lead character that other shows would be afraid to do. We are going to do something to Crichton, and sustain it, that other people would be afraid to do even a little bit. We are going to learn more about our characters' backstories and specific heritages. By the end of season two, our characters are rich. That colors the way you live and act, and how you behave.

"D'Argo has always wanted his son more than anything. Now that he has him, you have to get used to having somebody new in your life who you don't really know. He's a

family member, but they don't really know each other. I suspect that if you imagined a real life situation where a father and son got together after not being together for ten or twelve years, it might not all go smoothly. They don't know each other; they have to learn about each other. I can promise that the storylines for season three will push us deeper into the Uncharted Territories and closer toward home, and that Crichton is going to remember early on what it is he wants most. Also, we are going to do what we think we do best: We are going to surprise people, and in some cases shock them. We wouldn't have it any other way."

Kemper laughed and said, "Think of it this way: Every Friday night, FARSCAPE is like a gift—a birthday or a Christmas present. You hope it will be one thing, and sometimes it is. Sometimes you get that toy that you wanted. Sometimes you get a bike, and sometimes you get a sweater. At the time you are thinking, I wanted the bike. But once you start wearing the sweater you really like it. If you just got ten bikes, what would you do with them? You need to get different things.

"What we always want FARSCAPE to be is like a surprise present. We don't want you to know what it is ahead of time. That's why we guard our secrets—we think it's more fun for you. It is certainly more fun for us to not know, so don't be surprised if things happen that you don't like. You just don't like it because you are not used to it, but you will be. At the beginning before everyone knew what the show was, if we had told them what the show was going to be, they wouldn't have wanted it, they wouldn't have liked it. You like what we do so far. Why do you assume you won't like what we do in the future?" □

final third of the trilogy. I love working with Wayne Pygram, because he is such a fantastic villain. I had Scorpius having a relationship Claudia Karvan. She plays a sexy, crab lady—they have this weird, sexual, alien relationship which is quite graphic without being explicit. Even though they've both got so much stuff on, they can still penetrate through all of it with these amazingly scintillating performances.

"D'Argo, kill me. D'Argo, please kill me."
—Crichton.

LIARS, GUNS, AND MONEY, PART III: PLAN B ★★★1/2

Production #10210. Airdate 1/19/2001. Written by Justin Monjo. Directed by Tony Tilse.

At the end of the last episode, Crichton surrendered to Scorpius in exchange for Jothec. Scorpius has him tied up and, with the help of Natira, is probing his brain to see if the clone has found wormhole technology. When the group on Moya realize John is gone, they decide to mount a rescue attempt. Talyn and Crais show up, having received a distress call from the burned Moya. In a climactic series of battle sequences, they manage to rescue Crichton, who is now completely crazy from his interaction with Scorpius and the clone.

Said Monjo, "You've got to satisfy. Five new guest cast and all our regulars shoot up a bank. Talyn comes in. You have space battles. Lots of people die. Then production screams at us, and we cut and we cut, and it's still huge.

"We burn up this generator room in the bank, and that's just one of five big things that has to happen. Moya comes down and blows out this whole window, probably 30 feet by 30 feet. Tim Ferrier's corridors alone must be 20 feet wide and 70 feet long—we built them for the first part, and used them a little bit in the second part, and then we blow them all up in the third part."

"Aeryn, forgive me. I love you."
—Crichton.

DIE ME DICHOTOMY ★★★★★

Production # 10222. Airdate 1/26/2001. Written by David Kemper. Directed by Rowan Woods.

Talyn is still trying to help Moya recover from her burns. The group has found a doctor on a frozen planet who may be able to help her, as well as remove the chip from John's head—although the human's operation may well incapacitate or kill him. By this time, Crichton cannot escape the image of Scorpius, seeing the half-Sebacean, half-Scarran even when he looks at himself in the mirror. John is in fact now the clone, and trying to contact Scorpius so he can turn himself over.

David Kemper made sure the whole season led up to this episode. He said, "These are the pieces I've got. I know I have to write a season-ender that makes some kind of sense. When I sat down to do it, I wasn't sure where I was going to go. At one point, I was going, 'I need some action in this piece. I'm going to have Crichton escape the ship in his module, and then we'll have to bring him back.' Ricky Manning said, 'Why don't you have a dogfight? Why don't you have Aeryn go shoot him down?' I thought, 'That's a great idea.' Now we have a dogfight which is Act Three.

He continued, "As I was plotting this thing, Aeryn was going to shoot Crichton down. Then I realized, I want to do something that's a little freakier. I'm just going to kill Aeryn. The way I constructed it, I don't foreshadow it. Even as it's happening, you're thinking, 'She can get out of this.' Then at the part where you think she is going to get out of, it gets worse, and eventually she dies. It's a surprise. I believe that people are going to go 'What?' and sit there and stare at the screen, and go, 'Wait, but she's not dead.' She's dead, and I think people are going to get upset" □

FARSCAPE

Gigi Edgley

By Anna L. Kaplan

Gigi Edgley, the blonde, beautiful, lithe young woman who plays FARSCAPE's Chiana, repeated an acting joke a friend told her, "There are five stages of acting: 'Who is Gigi Edgley? Get me Gigi Edgley. Get me a look-alike for Gigi Edgley. Get me a younger Gigi Edgley. Who is Gigi Edgley?' I hope I am still at the 'Get me Gigi Edgley stage,' otherwise I'm in big trouble this early on in my career. It's been a whirlwind."

Edgley came onto FARSCAPE as a guest star in the Season One episode "Durka Returns," which she still thinks of as a favorite episode. The writer/producers quickly decided to keep Chiana on board Moya. Chiana, or "Chi" as she is often called, is young, rebellious, seductive, manipulative, larcenous and violent. Natural allies with Rygel, she uses her charm on all the males, including Crichton and D'Argo, although the relationships soon turn to something deeper. "When D'Argo comes into her life," observed Edgley, "I think there is a friendship there and a closeness that almost gets too close, so very interesting stuff starts turning up."

By Season Two, Edgley was a regular cast member. Chiana began to get on a bit better with her shipmates. The fans first got a glimpse of alien sex in the first part of "Look at the Princess." Some weren't sure what to think.

Said Edgley, "The D'Argo and Chiana relationship, people were going, 'Where did that come from?' I said, 'I don't know, but it's kind of aesthetically intriguing, don't you think?' I remember Anthony Simcoe and I were falling around and going, 'Okay, how would they have sex? Like this?' The director looked in and said, 'What are you doing?' I said, 'We're having alien sex.' He said, 'It's got to resemble sex, so people will know what you are doing.' So this very creative, avant-garde style of sexual intercourse got a very earthbound-looking style added to it. So

far, a lot of the fans I've met aren't liking the relationship at all. They say, 'What's going on? I thought there was something happening between Aeryn and Crichton and Chiana, and then all of a sudden it flipped on its head.' You've just got to open your imagination a little bit. Honestly we are just trying to fulfill the writers' vision. The writers most definitely have got the best view the big picture. So when there is weird stuff going on with D'Argo and Chiana, I guess they are

nice juicy bits in there.' It reminds the viewers of the alien characteristics. When they come into these dire straits situations, this is the way this alien deals with it: She doesn't know what to do, so she goes back to what she knows, which is to cheat and to lie and to step on people because she wants to be safe. Somewhere inside, she knows it's not right, which makes it all the more painful. It brings up that alien characteristic, which is good.

"We've had hints that she can fly, or she can at least bound quite far. She has to have this sexual interplay the whole time, so I realize this is a trait. She's also very animalistic: When things don't go her way, she gets territorial, and this is all she cares about."

Edgley has no idea what is coming up for Chiana in season three. She often tries to look ahead, but it doesn't always help. She said, "David Kemper has finished series three in his mind. At least he knows where it is all heading. It changes a lot, because it comes down to us on set, and how we interpret the writing. Then he goes, 'I never knew that beat was there. They've just turned this bit on its head.' But at least it's a rough plan you can sort of go by."

"Sometimes I've found that if you listen to it too much, then you trip yourself up, because it changes. You are looking forward to this arc in your character, and then it's just not there, and you go, 'Where'd that go? I thought this was in this ep.'

'No, Gig, that's been scrapped.' I reckon the time you can start listening is a couple of weeks before the ep is going to come up."

What were Edgley's plans for Chiana in Season Three? "I want to play with her, really become committed to the freedom we are offered and take her back to her alien characteristics, but from a place of truth. There are a few interesting whispers of where she might be going. I want to commit to the dark side of her, which is scary. You have really got to trust the people you work with, to know that you can go the full degree, pull back and go, 'Good work, man,' and there is no weird chemistry after." □



meant to be bonding. In a later episode there has got to be some weird, maybe even life-threatening situation, where that interesting chemistry is going to come up again."

Although Edgley is sensitive about Chiana and sometimes concerned that people won't like her if she behaves badly, she recognizes the fact that her character is an alien and needs to be played that way: "In the initial stages, it seems that she warms to the members quite easily, and she may have killed someone. All of a sudden she turns around, and she is sweet as pie. I'm like, 'Okay, let's get into the juice. Who knows if anyone is going to talk to me after it or not, but there are going to be some

FARSCAPE

Wayne Pygram

By Anna L. Kaplan

Most everyone involved with FARSCAPE says that the show took a darker, edgier turn with the introduction of Wayne Pygram as Scorpius in season one. Pygram delights in his role, which started in the block of episodes that closed out the series' first year: "I still think very fondly of my first four, because I made a very confident start. I developed Scorpius very quickly, and I felt very comfortable in his shoes, very quickly.

"Benny [Browder] was very generous. He basically handed over the sets to me, just went, 'Off you go Wayne, play time.' I was made to feel very welcome from my very first day at work. This is a very happy family on FARSCAPE. I think it shows in the work."

Pygram believes that the makeup for Scorpius, a prosthetic developed by Dave Elsey of The Creature Shop, goes a long way towards making the character seem real. He noted, "The first time I put the prosthetic and the costume on was very exciting, very liberating. There is a special way to work inside the mask. It gives you a lot of freedom in lots of ways, but there are also traps. You have to fill the costume and prosthetic, you can't be seduced by it. If you just sit behind it, all you see is the prosthetic, you don't see a person or a creature or anything emotional. Initially they wanted me to wear contact lenses. I can wear them, but they are uncomfortable. When we did my camera test, I said [to Dave Elsey,], my 'daddy,' 'Can't you take one of those contacts out.' He took one out and he looked at me and say, 'Oh yes, Wayne's eyes are much colder.' Out of a haphazard decision on the day, I look back and I thank the Lord that we did that."

Pygram may see out of his own eyes, but he can't hear. He again turned a problem into a solution. He said, "I do have difficulties, because there are actually three layers covering my ears. They can actually put in an ear piece and I can

have a little monitor, but I've elected not to go that way. It hasn't given me trouble at all. Some of the actors play things quite loud. Some days it's quite noisy out there. There are big scenes. I learned to lip read, which I quite like. Playing Scorpius, it's like, 'I am a superior being. I don't have to hear you. I just know.'"

He added, "I was lucky enough to hop onto a way to talk that was interesting, not earth-bound, but still makes sense. I totally re-created the punctuation, so sentences



would finish in the middle, or wherever. The rhythms were quite unusual. I had that to begin with, but once I put the costume on and the prosthetic, it was easy."

Pygram described what Scorpius actually is, saying, "He's a half-breed: half-Scarran, half-Sebacean. I call him the bastard son of a Scarran concubine. He's the only one of his type. If his mother hadn't been raped, he wouldn't have been the being that he is.

"He has the memory of an elephant. He doesn't forgive in a hurry. He carried a desire for payback against his father for a long

time. Not only did he kill him, he killed the whole race, as far as the men were concerned. It's a lovely thing, character-wise, to have. This guy doesn't muck about. He doesn't do things by halves."

In FARSCAPE's second season, the writer/producers knew they wanted to keep Scorpius around. Noted Pygram, "A lot of this stuff we nut out as we go, because not all the arcs are complete. We are sort of inventing as we go, which I quite like, because it's alive. Every day is a challenge just to maintain continuity of storyline, so we don't confuse the audience. Sometimes I get confused myself. The chip, the coolant rod, all these things that have just come out of ideas that were spoken about over lunch, over a beer after work, just to create some interest and pump up the drama, and to give me a connection to him. How can we make him interesting? How can we keep him on board? They are very good, great storylines. At the end of the day, they work, which is good."

In fact, the second season revealed that Scorpius planted a chip in Crichton's brain that creates a clone of the villain, a character that only John can see or hear. Noted Pygram, "There is a danger in seeing too much of him, of Scorpius. I am hoping that the Scorpius clone will be a nice way of keeping me in the show without actually seeing too much of Scorpius, which means that the Scorpie clone will have to have a very clear, separate agenda. You can really stitch yourself up, because you can confuse everyone, including yourself. Which one is he now? There is a danger there. But if we are going to see more of him, he should be Scorpius' nemesis. He should be, like Scorpius is, pretty bloody ugly.

"I don't see Scorpius as a malevolent character. I don't think Scorpius gets pleasure out of people's pain—that's his means to an end. The clone could be a nasty bit of business. He enjoys hurting people, and could likely be the only danger to Scorpius himself in the future, which is great. That's sort of an allegory of life. Your biggest danger is yourself." □

FARSCAPE

Dave Elsey/ Henson Creature Shop

How a quick trip to Australia to create background aliens turned into two seasons of innovation.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Dave Elsey moved from England to Australia to take on the job of creative supervisor of Jim Henson's Creature Shop for FARSCAPE. Recalled Elsey, "I was sitting in Pinewood Studios, having just got back from Scotland where I had done some rather nasty makeup effects for GREGORY'S GIRL 2. The phone rang and it was Jamie Courtier. I have known Henson's for years, and had worked on THE WITCHES, doing Angelica Houston's make up. I had known Brian Henson since 1985 when we were both working on LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, me helping to make the Audrey II puppets and Brian puppeteering. So I wasn't surprised to hear from Henson's, but since I had my own company I didn't expect to be offered work. In fact, I don't think that Jamie started by talking about FARSCAPE at all.

"Eventually, he cryptically asked if I'd be interested in living and working in Australia. Of course I wanted to know all about the show so I could make up my mind, especially as I knew I would have to give up my company and home in England. Jamie said that it was about a bunch of aliens that he and Henson's had been working on for the last 9 months, and I would really just be babysitting them. He added that there might be the odd guest alien for me to create, and that's really what excited me. So I said yes, especially when I saw how cool

the main creatures were."

At that point, Elsey thought he would just be working on the occasional guest alien. He started to think about the prosthetics he wanted to use. He remembered, "I was asked to start work on some background aliens for the show whilst I was still in England. The idea was to sculpt up some STAR TREK-type foreheads that could be stuck on anybody when I got to Australia. I said that I didn't really want to go down that route. I thought it better that I wait until I got to Australia and then try and talk them into doing something more exciting, especially as the bench mark had already been set by what the London Creature Shop had done. This turned out to be the move that has almost killed me over the last two years.

"I put my life in England on hold, moved out to Sydney with my small team, and drove out to Fox Studios to meet the cast and crew. I was shown my workshop, which was in a building called the Dog Pavilion, which had previously housed, you guessed it, dogs. I was surprised to find that it was still being used as a car park. After my first meeting with everyone it became clear that the 'odd guest alien' in fact equated to me populating the rest of the FARSCAPE universe.

"I told Matt Carroll that I didn't want to do 'just forehead aliens,' and to my surprise and contrary to my past experience with producers, he didn't either. In fact we both

agreed that a level of quality had been set with The London Creature Shop's creatures and we didn't think that we should ever slip below that mark. Unfortunately there was only a few weeks before we commenced filming and nothing had been started. So along with Colin Ware (my assistant) and Lou Elsey (my head fabricator and wife), I started creating aliens as the walls of my workshop were put up around my ears. I remember sitting at our one, borrowed workbench with one bag of clay and just starting to sculpt. The next shock as we started to open crates and Mack Wilson and his puppeteers started playing was that it became apparent that many things needed re-thinking. Many problems reared their ugly heads.

"Meanwhile, the workshop started to fill up with crew. As the shoot got nearer and nearer I can remember Pete Coogan [Henson's executive-in-charge-of-production] saying to me, 'The scary thing is we'll never get this much time to build anything again.' As soon as the show started we would be building and shooting simultaneously."

Elsey worked with makeup and hair supervisor Lesley Vanderwalt to create the look of Zhaan, played by Virginia Hey. He said, "The other thing we had to get into place very quickly was Zhaan. There were already many concept sketches when I arrived, but none of them worked when tried. Virginia still had a full head of hair at the time and we were making a foam latex bald



A bounty in the bizarre: Offered a universe of lifeforms to envision, creative supervisor Dave Elsey (above left, with personal favorite, the Proprietor) and his team of artists have populated FARSCAPE with creatures both subtle and outrageous.

FARSCAPE

The Puppeteers

The artists who breathe life into the Muppets tackle a universe swarming with aliens.

By Anna L. Kaplan

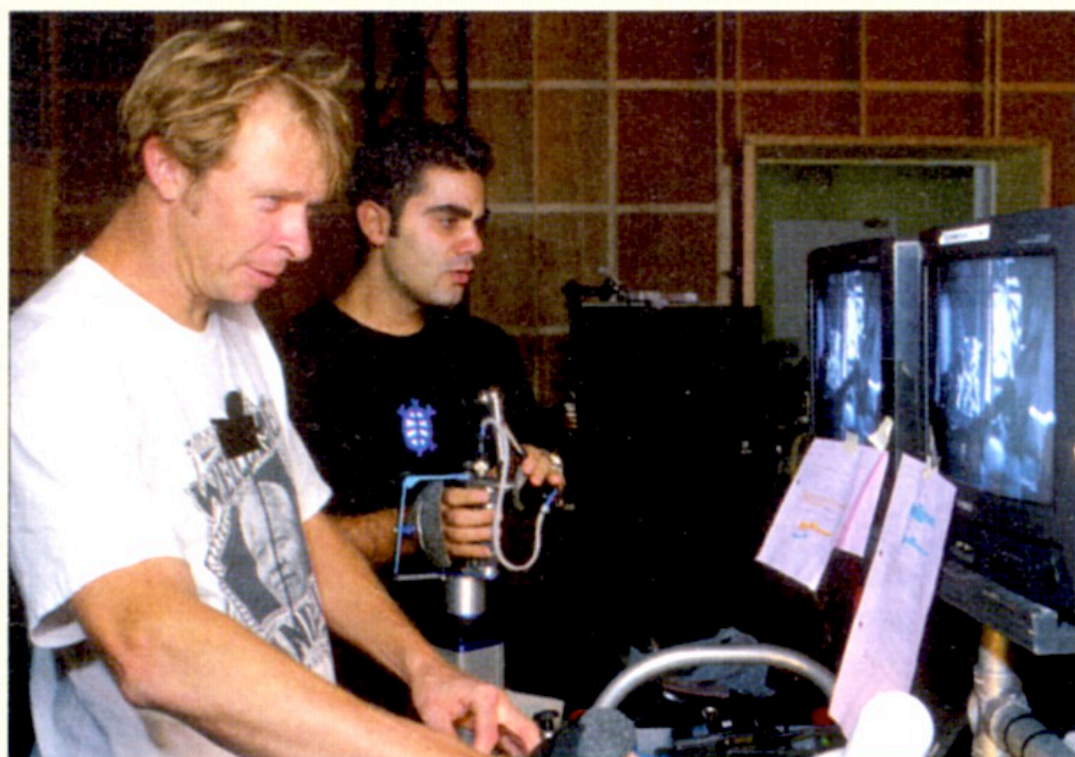
The biggest compliment you can give Sean Masterson, the lead puppeteer for Pilot on FARSCAPE is that you forget the creature is a puppet. The same thing could be said to Tim Mieville about Rygel, or to any of the team of puppeteers who work on the show, including, among others, Mario Halouvas, Matt McCoy, and Fiona Gentle. Credit the human actors, too: Each time you see Rygel, for example, in a scene with other characters, the cast is stepping over and around the puppeteering team, pretending they aren't there.

Said Masterson, "It's a funny thing, because you see the actors walking around the puppet during shots. The thing about Rygel or any of the animatronic puppets is that generally what you see on screen is really only the tip of the iceberg. Nineteenths of the bulk of what's going on is underneath. You've got four or five people hanging off, and the actors have to carefully step around, and make it look as if they have normally walked up and just stood beside him. There is a whole lot of cabling, and monitors, and bodies lying all over the floor. All the actors do a great job. It's been months now since we have had fingers stood on or anything like that, which used to happen quite a lot in the early days. The actors got into the swing quite quickly, but it's still unusual. They have to act quite normal, like they are just taking a swagger up and giving Rygel a clip behind the ear, or something

like that. What that involves may be stepping over a couple of monitors, side stepping over someone's head and making sure you don't tread on someone's stomach."

A whole team of puppeteers is needed to work the two main

responsible for the performance. Later, Lani Tupu voice-overs Masterson's dialogue in post. John Eccleston was first season lead puppeteer on Rygel, who had less animatronics and was more like a Muppet. In the second season, Tim Mieville took



ABOVE: Puppeteers at work. RIGHT: Preliminary designs for Pilot.

character puppets, Rygel and Pilot. Said Masterson, "We have five full-time puppeteers to operate, predominantly, Rygel and Pilot. We also cover all animatronic faces and various creatures that come along. Rygel takes five of us to operate when we've got all the bits and pieces moving. When Pilot is up and running, it takes seven to operate. The various other creatures generally take two or three people. So we have a pool of part-time puppeteers that we bring on set as well."

Masterson is the lead puppeteer on the gigantic Pilot. Mario Halouvas is inside Pilot's body, while Masterson is re-

sponsible for the performance. Later, Lani Tupu voice-overs Masterson's dialogue in post. John Eccleston was first season lead puppeteer on Rygel, who had less animatronics and was more like a Muppet. In the second season, Tim Mieville took

over the character, who had a make-over to enable him to have the same kind of facial movement as Pilot. Jonathan Hardy has always provided the voice for the Dominar. All the puppeteers use monitors to see their performance. Explained Masterson, "Last year, Rygel was operated by a cable mouth with the animatronic features on top of that. But this year Brian Henson decided to make him much the same operation as Pilot—a fully articulated mouth and face, animatronic—so Tim has been in charge of that changeover, basically."

Said Mieville, "John had his

hand inside Rygel's body and mouth. He would operate the mouth much as you would a Muppet: with his fingers actually inside the lips. But he also had four cables that used to stretch down from points affixed to the mouth, that would change the lip shapes. They found that the mouth was a bit too clunky; he was just not precise enough. They were getting a lot of precise work out of Pilot, and they wanted to switch over to the system that Pilot is on, which means that you can, through animatronics, do fairly precise lip-synching."

As lead puppeteers, Masterson and Mieville perform on set similar to the actors, following the director's guidance. Said Masterson, "We are the interface between the director and the rest of the puppeteers, basically. We are on a comm-link to all of the other performers. We'll do a performance, the director then will come to us—for Rygel he will go to Tim, for Pilot he will come to me—and say, 'Can you speed that up? Can you put a bit more emotion? Can you raise the stakes?' Then you have to impart that to the other puppeteers and say, 'I need this and I need that.' We are the go-betweens."

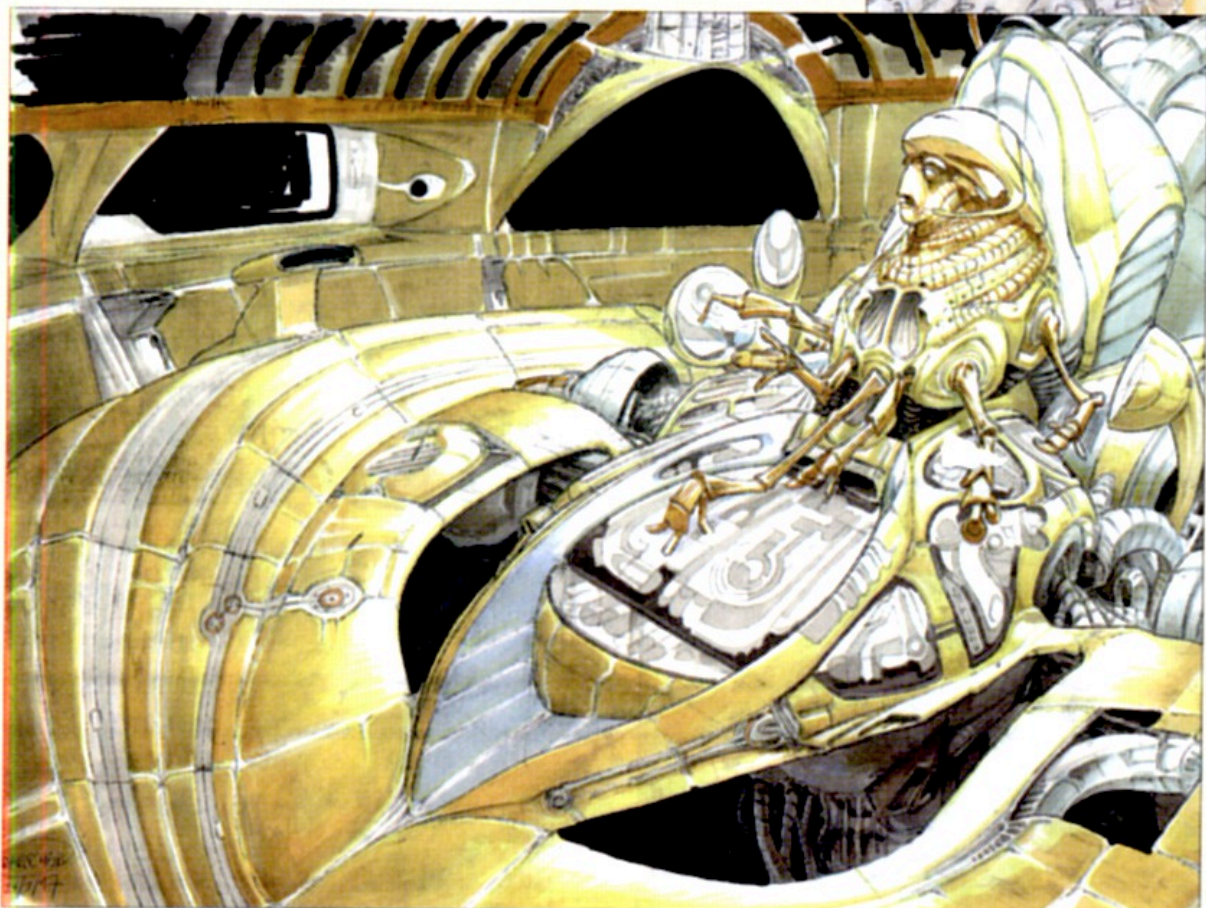
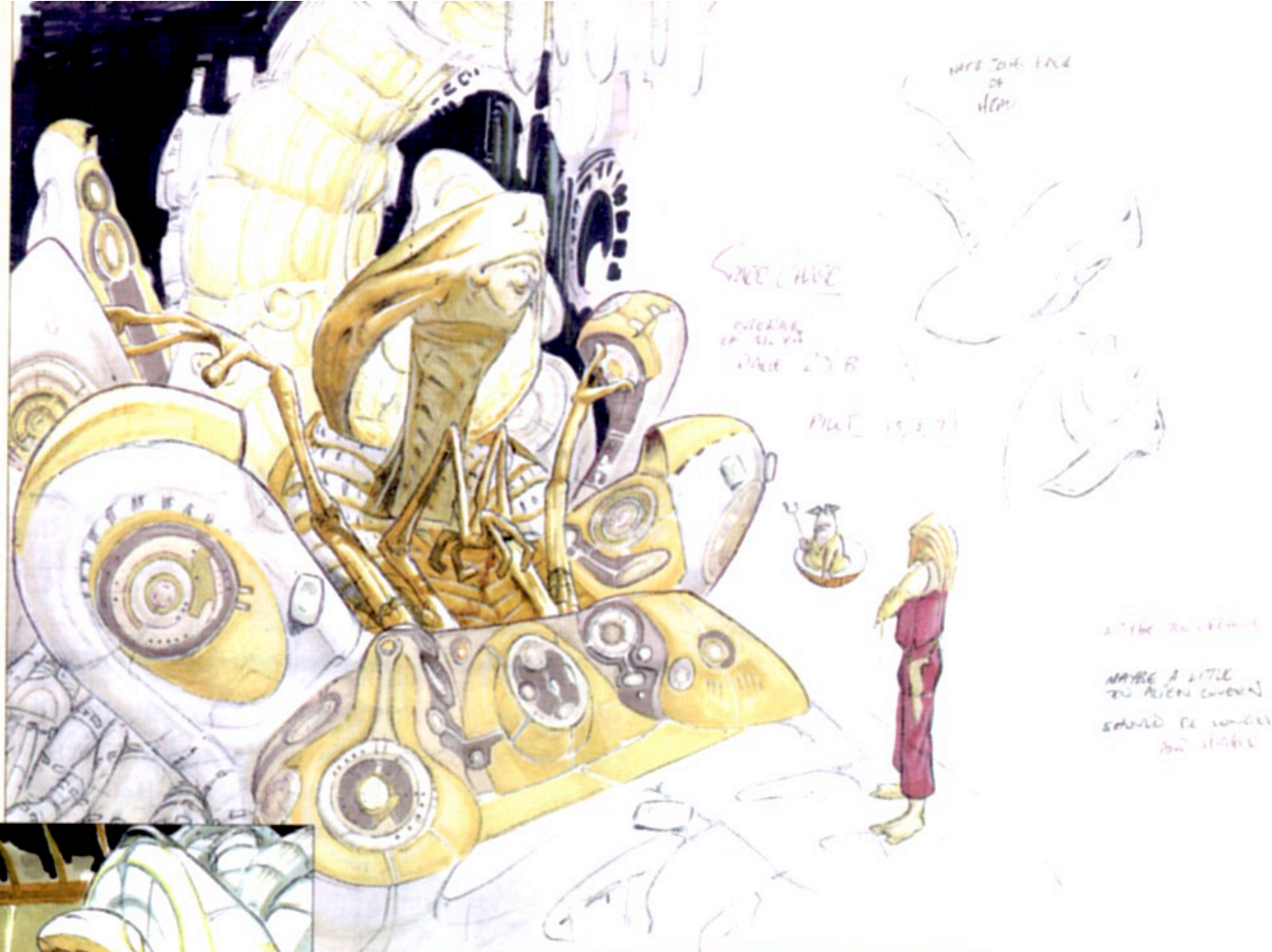
"The main thing about Pilot and Rygel with the lead puppeteering and the other puppeteers is the basic character is formed by three of the puppeteers. The lead, which does the lip-synching and does the voice on set, leads the other puppeteers: the features, the eyes, the blinks, the reactions, and the person inside the body

as well. There is generally a lot of intense discussion between those three puppeteers every time we are on set and the director wants something. That's where the core of the character happens. Everyone contributes to it, obviously, but that's where the core of the character is."

For Pilot, Masterson is lead, Halouvas is inside and Mat McCoy works Pilot's eyes. Said Halouvas, "While I am inside I have a monitor between my legs, so I just look down and see the shot down on the monitor. At the same time, I have my

for head positioning or body turns for Pilot, things like that, as we are doing it.

"We work off monitors whether we are on set, or off behind camera. We have a feed that comes directly from the camera; we might have about four or five monitors



comms on my ears, which are communicating with Sean up front and Mat McCoy, who is on eyes for Pilot.

Added Mieville, "It's an interesting process. We quite often need to head towards keeping the action the same, so that we all meet up at the same point on it. Other actors have got a lot more scope to improvise. We have the scope, or the potential, but obviously we have to translate to five different people what we are about to do, so it's a bit tricky."

Said Masterson, "You've got to be pretty well-focused. For an example: Mario is inside the body of Pilot. We try to get him out as much as possible, but it gets very, very hot. He's got to concentrate on doing his scene, but he's also got an air conditioning unit blowing air up to him. He's got a comm link to me and the other puppeteers, and he'll offer up suggestions

so we can actually see what the camera sees. We can't work like an actor does and just do it live. We have to have monitors to see that we are in the shot, that the arms look natural. A lot of our work is reversed, so we actually have flipped monitors as well. And we have to make sure we are out of the way."

Laughed Mieville, "Quite often you can look at us and see us doing something up in front of and above our heads, but we are looking between our legs or over our left shoulder, or something like that. It apparently looks quite bizarre sometimes. What's also bizarre is that Mario and I—or Matt and Sean when they are doing Pilot—apparently wear a lot of the expression that comes out of the puppets faces. We don't quite believe it ourselves."

Masterson and Mieville explained that they try to make the puppets appear less alien and

more human. Masterson also gave a bit of the history of Rygel and Pilot: "One of the things that Brian wanted was not to make Rygel a humorous character at all. Pilot was going to be the humorous character. Brian said to me early on to try and get this idea of a Californian surferdude—not quite sure of what he is doing—and get a bit of humor into it. When we first started shooting, the characters completely swapped. Rygel became the more humorous character, and Pilot became the more serious, let's-get-the-job-done type character. The writers, Rockne and David just ran with it."

As the actors have learned to interact with the puppets, and as the puppets put in serious time on set, there have been accidents and breakdowns. Said Masterson, "One of the worst nightmares is for one of the servos to burn out on Rygel or Pilot, or any of the characters that have servos. We had a servo burn out in Pilot in a particularly difficult area at the beginning of the season. You basically have to take half his head off to get inside. Once you get the new servo in, it has to be reconditioned on the computer, so for three hours, we had a full crew just standing around."

Added Mieville, "The worst moment for Rygel I think was

in an episode where he got zapped by a ray. He gets flung back, and his head fell off. It was hanging by a thread."

There are often guests with animatronics that these puppeteers work with, everyone from Francesca Buller, who played M'Lee first season, to the Sheyangs, who reappeared at the end of Season Two. The bird-like Halosians of season one were definite cousins to a previous Henson species: the Skeksis from DARK CRYSTAL. This last season the puppet of Pilot had to play double-duty, also appearing as Moya's first Pilot. Makeup was used to slightly change the creature's appearance.

Said Masterson, "We've got a very good team in The Creature Shop, [which] does the on-set makeup for Rygel and Pilot. Where he's a different Pilot, obviously we can't do too much about him, because he is needed for other shots. But some makeup and various other things changed his appearance."

Like everyone else, this team enjoyed the change of pace in "Won't Get Fooled Again." Said Masterson, "Pilot playing the congas in a caftan in a club; Scorpius playing the drums behind him; it was pretty wild. It was a very strange ep to shoot. We had a ball with the ep; Rygel in a leather harness."

Laughed Mieville, "Rygel looks pretty good in bondage gear, actually. I think he's worn that kind of thing before, back in Hyneria." □

cap for her, like the one worn by Alan Rickman in GALAXY QUEST. Because of the schedule, we had 24 hours to make this and it turned out quite nice, but I hated it.

“Virginia started talking to me about shaving her head. She had beautiful, long blonde hair, and I was very worried about doing it. But we looked at her head and bone structure and I told her that I thought her head was a nice shape. Then one morning she was bald. We made her some very subtle ears — Brian suggested looped earlobes, like Buddha, and we changed that into something a little more elegant, to match her face. I also suggested contact lenses. Lesley Vanderwalt and I started testing out paint jobs with varying degrees of success. There was only about 3 days till filming now, and still no Zhaan. The trouble was, the designs for the paint job were too simplistic and I knew from painting prosthetics that it takes a lot of work to make an opaque paint job look translucent and real. How do you do something complex, quickly, every day? I was standing in make up, with Virginia’s blue undercoat drying, talking about this, when I noticed her costume had this weird fabric with holes in it. So I said to Lesley, ‘What if we spray different colors through this, and use it as a stencil to tie her paint job into her costume?’ We asked Terry Ryan if he had any fabric left, and that was Zhaan.”

The main character with the most prosthetics is Anthony Simcoe’s D’Argo. Simcoe had already traveled to London to get his full body mold. Said Elsey, “D’Argo was made by Nigle Booth, who is a genius at sculpting and makeup. He did D’Argo’s makeup for a while here in Australia, and then trained up Damien Martin to take over. Since then, D’Argo has been modified and re-sculpted by me for Season Two. He also received a new paint job by Damien to show the results of what had happened in Season One’s finale.”

Simcoe is very happy with the changes made to his makeup. He finds it easier to move his face pieces. He also thinks that the darker skin color looks more real. D’Argo acquired the “tan” after floating in space without a space suit in “Family Ties” at the end of the first season.

Rygel and Pilot had long existed, in various stages, from sketches, to maquettes, to puppets. Said Elsey, “With regards to

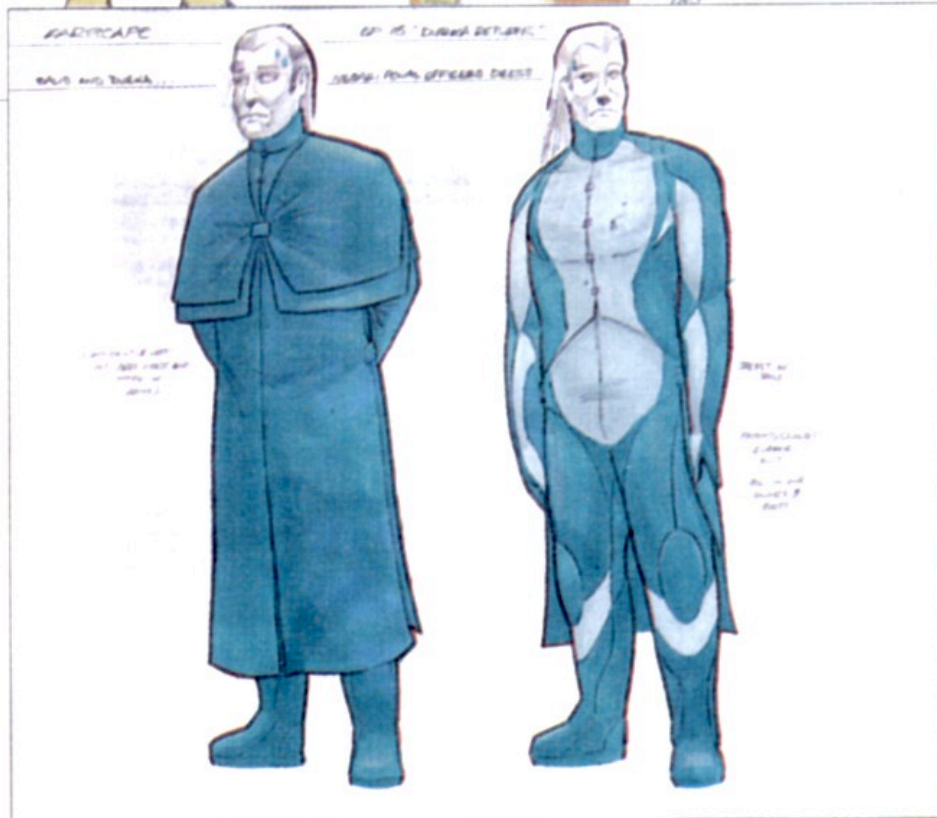
Rygel and Pilot, everything that Henson’s does gets designed beautifully and copiously before any clay gets touched. There were many, many designs for the main characters before they were started. The show had been in development for years. They then

get taken to maquette stage by the artists who built them. I have the copies of the original maquettes here with me in Australia. Once these designs were approved, the nine-month build began. Rygel is operated by six people, and he has been through many re-builds since he first arrived in Australia. It’s only when you get a complex puppet like this on set that you can work all the bugs out. Mechanically, his face is astounding, even by film standards. He makes Yoda look like Kermit. We also constantly tweak him cosmetically, because I wanted him to have preened himself as the show progressed. When we first meet him, he has just escaped from prison and looks rough around the edges. But as the show goes on, I assumed that, being a very vain creature, he would start looking after himself. There exists a CG Rygel also for when we see him walking or flying in

long shots. When we see him walking in mid-shot or close-up it’s just old fashioned puppeteering. Sometimes we remove the puppeteers and rig with green screen for his flying scenes. Pilot is much the same deal, although we never see him move or see his lower half in season one.”

FARSCAPE found a new, dark villain at the end of the first season, in Wayne Pygram’s Scorpius. Explained Elsey, “As the show progressed last season and we all began to get a feel for what FARSCAPE was, it became apparent that we needed a really great villain. I received a little description of Scorpius from David Kemper, our executive producer/writer, describing him as an evil Mr. Spock. He was needed in two weeks, the usual amount of time we get to build all our aliens. They also wanted him to be ‘easy to do and quick.’ As soon as I read the description, I knew that he had to be the most evil character we had ever seen. He had to be the SS, the Emperor from Star Wars, and the Grim Reaper all rolled into one.

“As quickly as I could, I painted up my design and showed it to David Kemper in the morning. He loved it. I then decided that I was going to make the face translucent because I had seen many other pale makeups fail because paint makes them look like they are wearing clown makeup. So Colin Ware, Damien Martin and myself started experimenting with new materials. Colin and I had had some success with silicone appliances and had won an advertis-



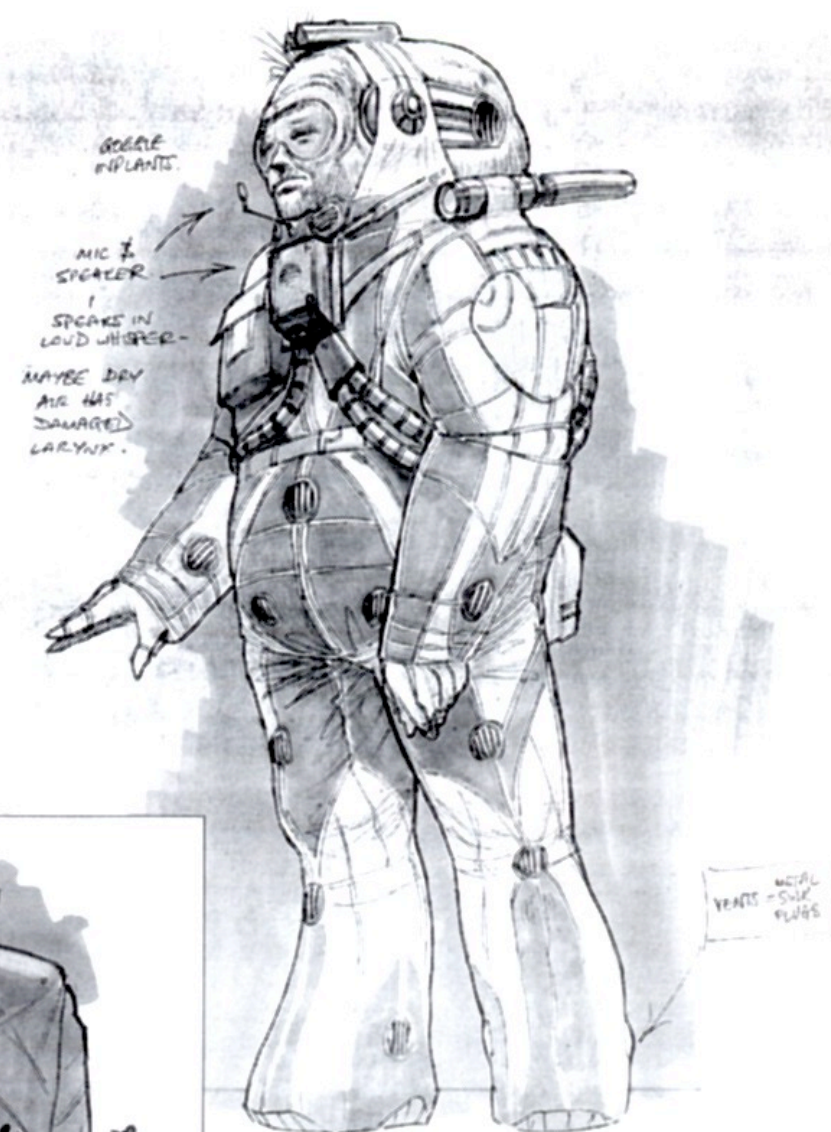
ing award for a Grim Reaper makeup using this material, but we weren't convinced that it would work on a fast-moving show like FARSCAPE. Gelatin was no good because it melts under the lights. We kept trying new combinations of stuff. Eventually, after many unsuccessful attempts using different materials, we came up with what we now call HOTFLESH, which was a good job because our two weeks were up. We did a makeup test the day before filming and it looked like nothing we had ever seen before. It was incredible! I was glad because I had no plan B.

"We also had contact lenses made, but we just couldn't use them. I thought Wayne Pygram's own blue eyes looked so good staring out of Scorpie's face, that it would

FARSCAPE creatures and it is more than a match for Scorpie. This season we have started doing creature costumes, and this means that we can do much more sophisticated-looking creatures. Lou Eley created the costume for Scorpie's love interest, and in doing that has invented a whole new way of achieving a never-seen-before look, using many unusual materials. There are also one or two surprises about the creatures head."

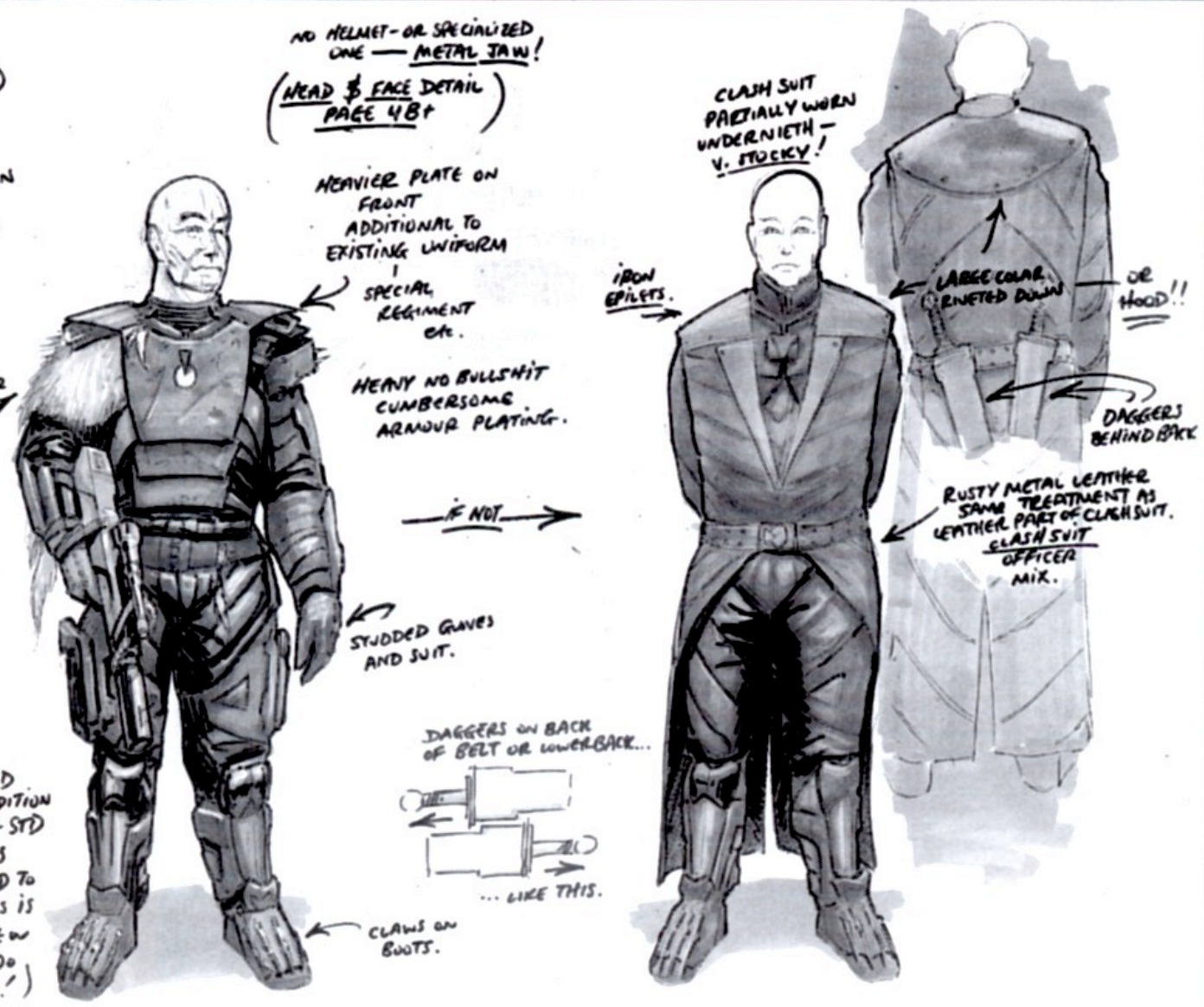
Eley was also proud of many of the creatures created just for one episode, like the Proprietor, seen on the Commerce Planet in the first episode of Season One. He noted, "The Proprietor was a huge creature

EP. 11 'TILL THE BLOOD RANG' DRY"
"FURION"



FARSCAPE
SCORPIUS. PAGE 4.

COSTUME: - CARBONING ON WITH THE MISADVENTURER MOGUL LOOK THAT HAS EVOLVED IN P.K. DESIGN
MIXED WITH A TAUTE OF THE NAZI SS.....
MIGHT BE GOOD THAT WHEN WE SEE HIM HE'S IN CLASH SUIT INSTEAD OF OFFICERS UNIFORM - HE'S ONE OF THE TROOPS STILL LIKES TO GET HIS HANDS DIRTY - IN THE FIELD - A PRO - A KILLER!
WORN & SCARLED CLASH SUIT
SCALPS TIGHT PIECES OF HIGH ARMOUR
MAYBE SPECIALIZED GUN - ADDITION TO EXISTING STD ISSUE AS AERYN DID TO HERS (THIS IS HOW SHE KNEW WHAT TO DO WITH HERS.)



Girl'] with the Sheyang. I also like Namtar, the mad scientist in Ep. 9 ['DNA Mad Scientist'], just for the sheer quantity of makeup and animatronic characters on the screen. It also gave me a chance to demonstrate the leg extensions that I had built but never used for a Nike commercial."

After FARSCAPE's second season, Eley went on to the next STAR WARS feature film, at least temporarily. Said Rockne S. O'Bannon, with no little pride, "He told George Lucas, 'I need to be done by a certain date because I am going to go back to FARSCAPE.'" □

EARLY VISION: The first concept doesn't always get off the page (is that really China at upper left?), but by the time Eley and Co. are done, the results are as startling as the universe's number one odd-couple: Scorpius and Natira (lower right).

have been a waste. Since then we have improved the formula 100%. It has also gone from being a one-and-a-half-hour makeup to a 45 minute makeup. It looks better and stays on better than ever before. In season two we have been using it more and more and are constantly finding out new and exciting things about it. I have to say that at least sixty percent of the success of Scorpie's makeup is Wayne Pygram's performance and his unending perseverance in the makeup chair."

Late in season two, Scorpius surprisingly gets a love interest named Natira, a woman in a blue, crab-like prosthetic makeup. Said Eley, "It is a new bench mark for

of exactly the sort not usually seen in episodic television, made all the more exciting as it was just a background alien. He was built from scratch in just one week, including one extremely long all-nighter and a lot of dedication from my crew. I feel like we really got into the swing of it around Ep. 7 ['PK Tech



FARSCAPE

GMD Special FX

*“Build us a universe.
Can you turn that around in two weeks?”*

By Anna L. Kaplan

One of the first things to hit a viewer tuning into the premiere episode of FARSCAPE was the fabulous look of space and space vessels, all visual effects created completely in the CG realm by the Australia's Garner MacLennan Design (GMD). This difficult job took a team of some thirty-three people working in various capacities. GMD was responsible for building and animating all of the 3D models, building textures and environments, and completing the final compositing of CG elements with live action. GMD spent three months in research and development before beginning work on the actual show. In the end, they completed 1368 visual effects shots, making up fifteen percent of total screen time over the first season of twenty-two episodes.

Best known for its commercial work, GMD had to bid for the FARSCAPE contract. Explained managing director Jeff Oliver, “We actually had to go do a design pitch to win the job. The team here did their concept-design, star frames, and illustrated what we thought the space craft should look like,

what we thought the space environment should look like. The company has a history of doing very rich, densely layered, and very textured things. We are sort of famous in our own way for our visual style, our aesthetic, as such. We put a great deal

new sense of reality. We do a lot of that work in the TV commercial area, because the main area of interest in this company is TV commercial production. The other main area is broadcast design, where we do a lot of station ID's, program titles, on-air

do something that is very primary colored, but it still has a very different look because of the way it's lit. Or we might do something that is quite dense and quite textural, and then again it will look quite different because of the textures and the lighting.

“The big thing for us on [FARSCAPE] was that Henson and Hallmark came to us. We did our design pitch, and we won the job, and we were the only effects company as such that was doing the job. In Australia, traditionally what happens is that the large U.S. companies tend to win the job, and if the project is being done in Australia they farm out some of the work to a second-tier player in Australia. In this instance, we were it. We were responsible for the design and the production. We weren't feeding back to a U.S. visual effects director as such. The visual effects director on this project, Paul Butterworth, was part of the GMD team. FAR-



GROUNDING VISIONARIES: Moya crash lands; spectacular special effects from the first season by Australia's GMD.

of effort into textures and lighting. We put a great deal of effort into matte painting, the creation of environments. A lot of the work we do here is involved with shooting blue-screen environments and creating unreal environments that the live elements go into, so we create a

promos, that sort of stuff.

“Having been in business for about eleven years, we developed a reputation for a particular kind of look, even though that look is dramatically different from piece to piece. It's actually the quality of the work, it isn't the look at all. We might

SCAPE as a production unit didn't have their own visual effects director. Our involvement was much higher than it would have otherwise been.”

Oliver added, “The production designer, Ricky Eyres, is an incredibly talented fellow. We just ended up being part of that

team, in a way. It was very much a co-production, joint effort. It wasn't just us being an effects house or a post house, that they just threw things at and we did. It was joint creative meetings, developing ideas, developing looks, developing styles, and working very closely with the production designer. The overall design, between Henson's Creature Shop, Ricky Eyres, and us, they are the three groups of people that are responsible for the look."

Once the show started production, GMD had to do its work very quickly. Said Oliver, "We had a production period that began with first-draft concepts at thirteen weeks, paring down to two weeks of online time to finish all of the main work and the main compositing. So it was scheduled over a thirteen-week run, that dovetailed into a two-week period, where you did all your finals and your final compositing before you delivered the episode."

To get the work done meant adding employees. Said Oliver, "The core team was already here, and we had contractors to build up that team. All companies expand and then contract and then expand again. But the key management and creative roles were GMD. The team was made up of about a dozen 3D animators, five NT compositors, and two Flame-Inferno compositors."

GMD had to create images of Moya and any other space vehicles, including Peacekeeper ships, Crichton's Farscape module, and all other crafts. They had to put these ships into the environment of space, something they made look incredibly rich. Noted Oliver, "Every episode had, I think, a different ship in it, so getting that ship looking real was a real challenge. Space was blue and white and black until FARSCAPE came along. Now space has a sense of interior design that it never had before. It has a sense of texture and quality and differentiation that it never had before."

The most important ship GMD had to build and animate was the 3D model of Moya. Sketches and concepts were already available, but GMD had to make Moya come alive,

move, and change over the season. Said Oliver, "They came to us with a concept design. They would sketch up something and come to us with a concept, and we would have to develop that concept and turn it into a real living object in 3D. Moya evolved. Being a living creature, of course, there was the opportunity to have her evolve and grow and change. Because she was a living creature you could express a sense of character or personality about her, depending on what was required for the episode."

Not only did they build up and texture Moya throughout the season, but also add effects to the ship as she put up a protective shield, or went to Starburst. Noted Oliver, "We animate around the action of the model. You have the ship doing that action and then we develop those effects animations to go with them."

A favorite episode for GMD was "I, ET," in which Moya lands in a swamp. Said Oliver, "There are some shots where you are actually on set and you pan up, and as you pan up, you just see a huge extension of the set which is a matte painting, with 3D craft and 3D objects moving through it. We were able to create a much greater sense of scale doing that, and that I think added to the dynamic of the action, and the dynamic in the environment. One thing in particular that demonstrates that differently is when Moya lands in the swamp. Obviously that's a 3D ship, and the swamp is actually on the Northern beaches here in Sydney. That's a scene that was shot, and then we had to animate Moya crashing into the swamp, and actually animate the water and the splash and all those kinds of things around her. When you see that scene, it looks so real. It was a lot of work, but that shot really demonstrates to me the capability of the team that worked on that show, because it is quite unbelievable."

Another challenge was integrating live action in with the visual effects. In the episode "Durka Returns," Durka tries to leave Moya from the docking bay which Crichton decompresses. Said Oliver, "We did a

lot of integration in that one with live action and CG, like when Crichton is getting sucked through the doors of the docking bay there. There was one particular shot where Durka

we ended up using right through the whole show. We developed a lot of recipes, for want of a better word. I guess they are techniques, really, if we are going to be sophisticat-



MASTER BLASTERS: When they weren't presiding over the heavens, the staff at GMD concentrated on giving laser blasts a tangible presence.

runs out, up the ramp of the ship, and then the camera pans around to him coming to the front of the ship, and the doors opening, and him walking into the cockpit. That was a real challenge getting that to work, because obviously it was an entirely CG ship, we were trying to get it to match. We were making sure that when they shot it we had everything we needed, so there was lots of tracking data, but without motion control, there was a lot of creative camera work in there. Our role was actually to do shoot supervision and work with different episode directors to make sure that everything was shot so that we could actually achieve the result we needed to achieve."

Even the weapons-fire animation, all done on NT's in after-effects, was meant to look different than other laser-type fire. Said Oliver, "It needed to have an explosive quality to make it more dynamic. You see laser fire, and normally it's a line of white light. But it had to have some sense of dynamic when it hit, so you have an explosive quality to it, when it struck. We just developed a 'recipe' for doing that which

ed about it, but really they are recipes. And we developed them in that R-and-D period, and they continued to evolve through the run of the show."

GMD did not go on to FARSCAPE's second season. Instead, the wireframe models for Moya and other FARSCAPE spacecraft were passed on to Animal Logic, the company that handled second season work. What was the reason for the change? Said Oliver, "We ended up not doing the second series because they cut the budget so dramatically that we really just felt we couldn't do it. You go out with something like that first series which looks so fantastic, and the prospect of doing a lesser job was not something that the team really wanted to do. The production company really didn't want us to do it either, it turns out."

"But we have the show reel. It wasn't anything different to what we had previously done, it was just a different expression, and a different environment. It was a wonderful for us as a company, and I think it was a wonderful for all the team members who worked on it. □

FARSCAPE

Production Design

Envisioning a starship that's also a living entity was just the beginning.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Setting up the universe of FARSCAPE would be a daunting challenge for any production designer, and the experienced Ricky Eyres was perfect for the job. Having just finished work on SAVING PRIVATE RYAN, he was one of the first people brought onto the production team. "I started the 28th of April, 1998," he recalled. "I met Rockne O'Bannon in Los Angeles, spent two weeks with him and a bit of time with Brian Henson, in which time really 75% of the look of Moya was ironed out. The look of the show really was refined within that time. Ten weeks later, we were shooting."

Most of the action would

take place in Moya, a sentient starship. Said Eyres, "When I first started, Rockne O'Bannon had been doing some work with a firm in Australia, just trying to define what Moya might look like from the outside—just a rough guide. I developed it further because we had to get into close-up textures of the outside, determine what she really was on the outside. She was changed a little bit along the way, but the initial concept was Rock's. From what I saw of the initial idea, it just kind of sprung into my mind what the inside should look like. It obviously wasn't going to be square rooms, square areas—it evolved in an organic way. The shapes that

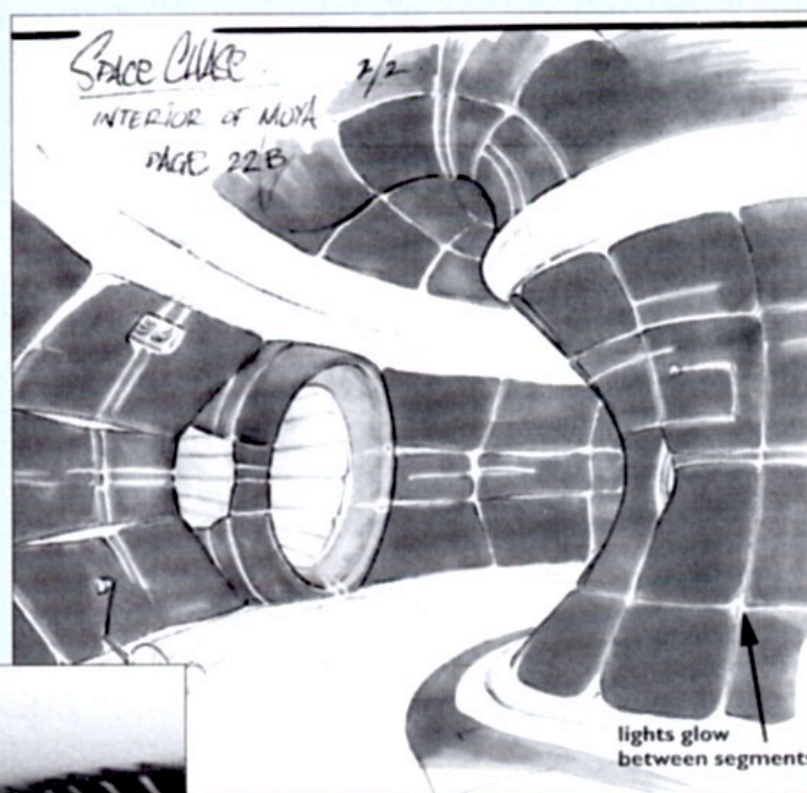
came from that kind of structure were organic, but all on one plane, and very derivative from mathematics.

"I tried to evolve a geometry that was Moya, so that she was more structured than a free-flowing line. Every curve on her has a geometry to it. It was part of an arc, of a curve. There

of bits all over the place. I'd like to think it's got its own kind of look."

Moya is supposed to be a huge ship. How much, and what, did they actually build? Said Eyres, "There were the rooms where they live—they've got the fan doors. Coming off of that, there's a junction

piece. There is probably fifty feet of corridor, in sections, so that given the space on the stage you could swing them around slightly into different kinds of combinations. But essentially they stay in one spot. In all, it's probably only about a hundred foot of the ribbed corridor, if that. Tony Tilse, the director, got into using a really wide angle lens. It just

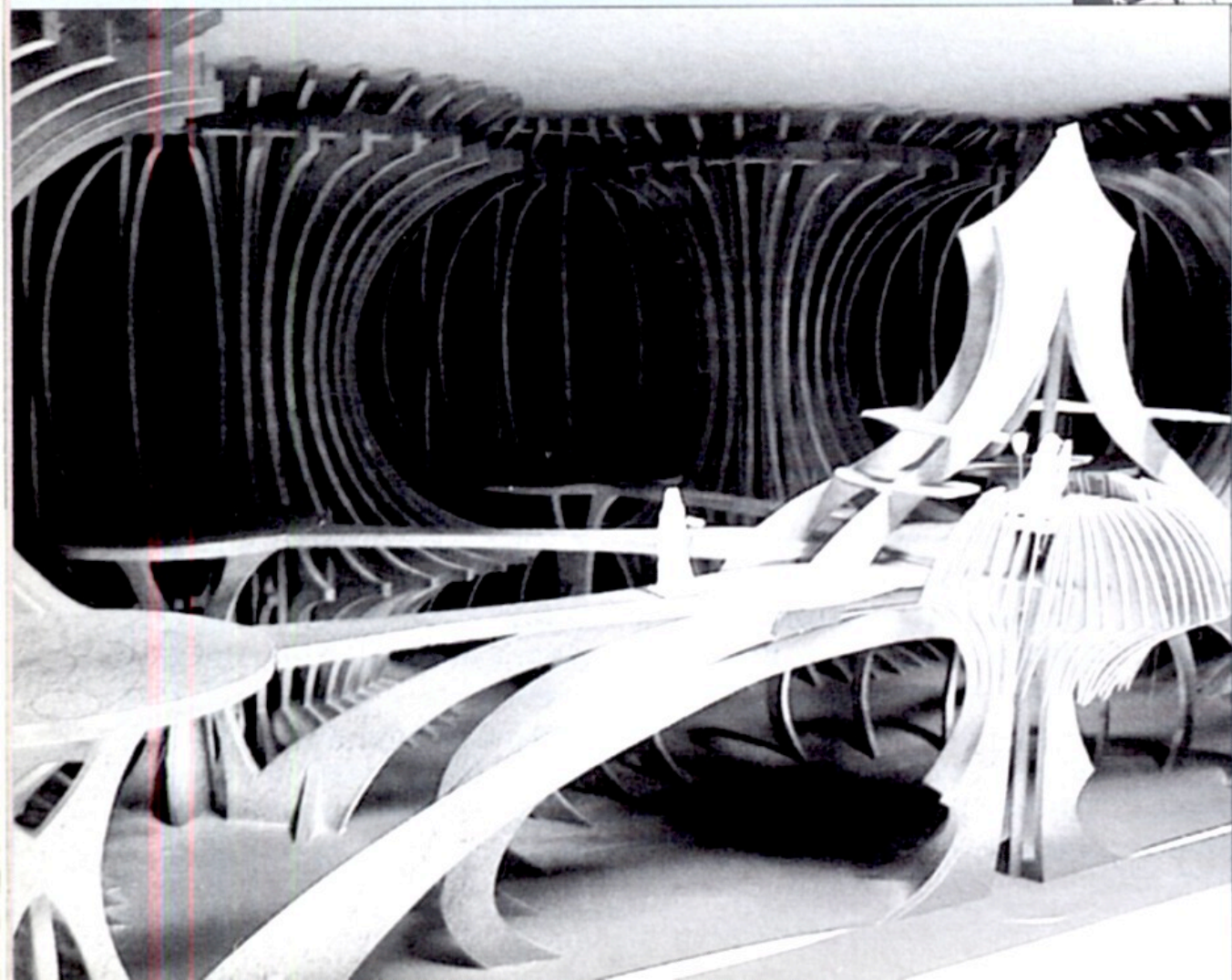


was mathematics involved. Once I got it clear in my head that we had a structure to work with, it fell into place. I think everything that we did, even from the smallest hand prop to the tables, the workbenches, the surfaces, right through to the actual structure of the ship, all spooned out of that geometry. There was inspiration from a lot of artists. There is a lot of Gaudí in there; there are a lot

worked with opening things up: As the rib completely encases the corridor, it just gave it scale. By running the camera down one way, then running down the other, you've essentially doubled your space, so it worked really well."

Eyres also built the set called Command. He explained, "Command is the room that has the big window out to space. There should have been more stuff in there, but quite frankly, we never got to it. I think we got probably 90% of the 150% I was trying to aim for. But I think the space works

Present in the dream: Episode after episode, production designers Rick Eyres and Tim Ferrier have melded the organic with the technological. Below: Moya interior. Right: Initial corridor design.



well.”

The next challenge for Eyres was creating the Peacekeeper look for Crais’ Command Carrier, and also smaller Peacekeeper ships. He noted, “With the Peacekeepers, as with all the races, you try and put a culture to them. The obvious thing with Peacekeepers was Nazi Germany, I suppose, but there was a lot of European style in there. The actual basis of the idea was my love of Russian Constructivism, which is turn-of-the-century art, in Revolutionary Russia. We thought the red and black and gray worked really strong for them, and as a good opposition to the gold and purple of Moya. It was just trying to get a real brutal style of some sort into the Peacekeepers, and giving them an aesthetic sensibility, really, rather than just being grunge, which I think a lot of science fiction has been. I’m not knocking other science fiction, I just wanted to stay away from that look. There is a kind of an elegance to Crais’ quarters, yet it is still kind of brutal and harsh, in a way. I think there is a pretty strong identity there for them. I think it was in a way as difficult as giving Moya an identity.”

Later, with Talyn, Eyres had to somehow combine the look of the living Moya with the appearance of a Peacekeeper vessel. He said, “That was a really interesting concept, because it was marrying the two. I did Talyn half a dozen times before we decided what it was finally going to be. It was interesting trying to fuse the organic and the brutal Peacekeepers together, figuring out whether or not you used the color of one, and the structure of the other. I did a thing that was more Peacekeeper structure, but in gold. It didn’t somehow seem to be as strong as being Moya’s structure, and in red. I use red a lot anyway. The concept of Talyn was quite a challenge, to fuse those two together. I think that came off rather well. The set was built as something that could expand, obviously because he is going to grow. I was actually planning to expand the set as he grew.”

Eyres spoke about FARSCAPE in general, saying with

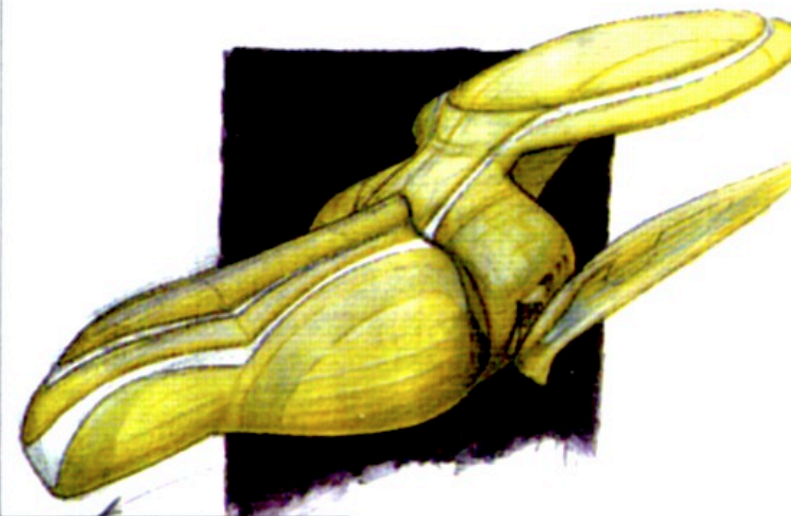
a laugh, “With most of FARSCAPE, I tried to accumulate a lot of set pieces that I could play around with. If you look through the whole first of the twenty-two, some of the set pieces are probably in it more than Crichton. They are turned sideways, upside down, painted a different color, given a different texture. When you have an episode turn around every eight days, eight days to build what is essentially a movie script just isn’t going to work. I just tried to accumulate as much as I could. We had masses at the end of Episode 22, just acres of stuff, but it was only the way to achieve some sort of scale.”

Eyres worked through the beginning of the second season. He said, “I did four in the second series, and laid the ground for about the first seven. There was one when D’Argo goes down and finds the old Luxan, ‘Vitas Mortis.’ That was kind of interesting. The other one was the where they did the free-falling off the rocks, ‘Taking the Stone.’ It was a huge script, but it was made achievable by the accumulation of Episodes 1, 2 and 3, and then putting all that into Episode 4 as well. So if you actually look at the old Luxan’s interior, that was actually the gravestones that were on the planet, part of them anyway. If you look at the shapes there, they were the slabs that became the gravestones. It was a constant theme, a way of being able to get scale. That’s how I worked.”

Eyres concluded by saying, “The whole thing was a massive challenge. It could have been easier if we didn’t aim so high. I think we had a great team on that year, all the way down from Matt Carroll to [line producer] Richard Clendinnen, to the makeup department. There was a real buzz going through it. We aimed high every time, and certainly got there, I think. From my point of view, working with Terry Ryan and Leslie Vanderwalt, and Dave Elsey, it felt like a really creative, inspirational team. And David Kemper... a lovely inspirational man. You

don’t very often get that.”

Said Kemper about Eyres, “What a genius that man is. I love that man. I love the sets. I love what Ricky Eyres has done.”



Command ship. Talyn is grown—not so much in this season, but in the next season Talyn will be quite big. We will be having several

Kemper also made many positive comments about Tim Ferrier. Finishing as set decorator on THE MATRIX, he took over from Eyres with the episode “Picture If You Will,” directed by Andrew Prowse. Said Kemper, “Tim Ferrier had just come on as our production designer, replacing Ricky Eyres. That was a challenge for him, and he was really nervous. They pulled it out great.”

Said Ferrier about his first episode, “It was challenging, because conceptually it was completely open-ended. We had a lot of latitude as to which way to take it, which is very freeing in one regard, but without any parameters it’s a little difficult sometimes. De Chirico was my inspiration. We took our inspiration from the surrealists.”

Ferrier had to maintain and build on existing sets. He said, “We’ve only had to build one new Moya set this year, which is called the neural cluster. Apart from that it’s basically just the maintaining of the existing sets. My responsibilities have been the new guest sets, and we’ve looked into extending Talyn and the Peacekeeper

Name that influence: Everything from Albert Speer to classical art is incorporated into FARSCAPE designs. From the top: Preliminary designs for Moya, PK ship, and Pilot.



sets there and a lot more action will be surrounding Talyn and Moya. We are touching on it at the end of season two.”

Ferrier liked especially working on FARSCAPE’s closing, multi-episode arc. He said, “I think probably I enjoyed doing these last three episodes because we did some very big and elaborate sets for those. We’ve done a lot of effects and explosions, and it involved a lot of visual effects as well. They’re probably the most exciting episodes, because they’re very action-oriented. There are quite a lot of sets there in different places, involving a lot of to-ing and fro-ing to a lot of planets. The biggest challenge is trying to find inspiration for new characters and new planets and new flavors for these people.”

Overall Ferrier is ready for season three. He said, “It’s a very exciting project to work on from a design point of view. You couldn’t really ask for a better opportunity.” □



MYTHOS IN THE MAKING: The more dedicated fans will come up with their own reasons why Zhaan's fellow Delvians have hair. In actuality, time and actor availability dictated the follicle divide.

FARSCAPE

Makeup

When Lesley Vanderwalt begins obsessing over the blue and gray, it's not the Civil War she's thinking about.

By Anna Kaplan

Lesley Vanderwalt, makeup and hair supervisor for FARSCAPE's first season, took some time out from her job on the next STAR WARS feature to discuss FARSCAPE. She worked with concept illustrator Kevin Hunter's sketches and the producers' ideas for the characters. Her most recognizable creation would have to be Zhaan, as played by Virginia Hey: bald, blue, and beautiful. Recalled Vanderwalt, "Originally the conceptual artist had drawn a harsh, almost evil look, dark-blue and white and spotty. We started discussing going to paler blues. I worked with some friends with Virginia's pictures on PhotoShop, and we did some stuff where she was paler blue, with some markings, and came back with that. They said that was a good blue, so we used the blue as a basis. Then Virginia arrived.

"At that stage I don't think she realized she was going to have to shave her head. We did a lot of tests with hair, tried different things, none of which really looked fantastic. Then we tried to do prosthetics, like a skullcap, so we could have her hair underneath it, cover it with a forehead piece, and cover her eyebrows. Virginia has got such a strong face, such strong bone

structure, really beautiful. But if you put too much on, she can look quite masculine. We played around — she knows her face really well, being a model. We both looked and said, 'It doesn't look good. It looks as though someone has put a turban or something on.' She said, 'Look, let's shave the head.' So

beautiful eyes and cheekbones, and we kept highlighting those. She's got blue eyes herself, but to just bring them out more we used contact lenses. I think we were all pleased with the end result. A lot of thought went in and a lot of talking before we actually did it. From the very beginning, we were looking at

character things with lots of drawings. Originally they talked about her changing color, like photosynthesis, where she would change color in different lights. She wouldn't always just be blue, she would go reds or greens. The schedule never allowed the timing for those sort of makeup changes. They could

have probably done it with lights, if she was in closeup, but if there were other people, they would be changing color as well. The makeup itself originally took about three-and-a-half hours, and then it came down to about two-and-a-quarter. I think to change that halfway through the day, take it off and put another one on, they would lose five hours shooting. That went out the window. She had white blood, like sap, like a plant, and the patterns, I suppose. We had been looking at plants like those big lilies with the lovely stamens inside and the spots

down the petals. We were looking at a lot of different plants, and had pictures of plants and flowers all over the walls, trying to get bits that would make things plant-like, but still on a human face."

What about the other Delvian women? They had hair in "Rhapsody in Blue," and Hey has joked about the fact that the women have hair and the men are bald. Laughed Vanderwalt,



ATTENTION TO DETAIL: Virginia Hey finishes up her makeup session, a process that now runs a brisk, two and three quarters hours.

we shaved the head, and we did the makeup that she ended up with, basically only a day or so before we actually started shooting.

"It almost went back to the original thing we had done on PhotoShop. We stuck with all the colors that we were going to use; we ended up using parts of her costume as stencils for the patterns on her face, and went with her bone structure. She has

other options apart from shaving her head for Virginia's sake, but in the end that gave you the cleanest and best lines with Virginia's face, and she totally agreed."

Although Hey did not know that Delvians were supposed to be sentient plants, Vanderwalt did. She said, "We went through all that at the beginning. Kevin Hunter, the conceptual artist working with us, had done big

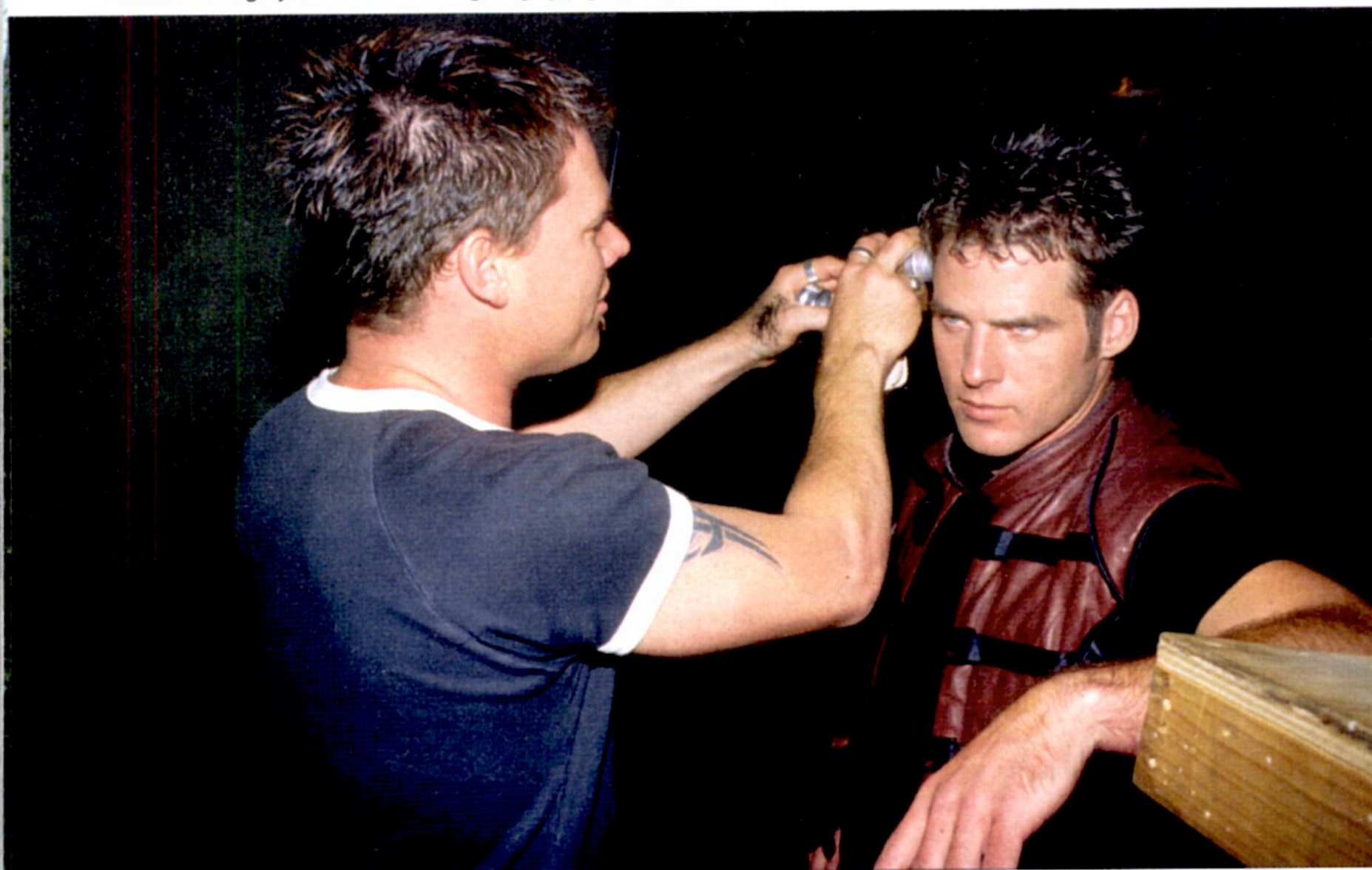
"That's a producer thing. They are only working for a few days, so I guess they weren't willing to shave heads. We only get a week's prep. By the time they have cast somebody, we only have four or five days. It wasn't really an option to make prosthetic molds. They came up with the idea of them having blue hair. The men were bald, but the women for some reason it just came up that they would have blue hair. That was quite difficult to do, try and get hair to match the makeup. We were using yak hair and white angora and then dying it up with clothes dye to match the make-up color. That was what was asked for by our powers that be."

Vanderwalt also invented the look for Gigi Edgley's Chiana. She said, "I went to a meeting, and they wanted another character to join the group. They didn't want someone sitting in a chair all day getting prosthetics. I remember going home and looking at a black and white magazine and thinking, 'I'd love to do a black and white, gray-type creature in a colored world.' I remember seeing RUMBLE FISH years ago and it was black and white, with just at the end, the two Siamese

fighting fish in red. I kept thinking it would be great to do that the opposite way around, put this monochrome person into a colorful world. The next day I came in with just black and whites, and mixed liquid make-up into different percentages, and then completely took out all her features and skin tone, made her completely flat. I started working back shadows into the face, using the different percentages of white and black mix. We never actually used any other colors apart from that. That was really difficult, because no matter what you use, obviously the red from the blood underneath when you put it under light would want to come through. You'd get pink areas and mauve areas, unless it was done really well. We'd have to do about three layers to cover that up. Then just to get synthetic hair to make her wig out of that was the right color gray was really interesting. You had pink grays, and green grays, and brown grays, but to get the right silvery-gray was really difficult. We ended up getting a lot of old wigs they didn't make anymore, picking and cutting and giving those to the wig maker to put back together in the style we wanted. Gigi was



ACCORDING TO NEED: For Earthling Ben Browder (below), a quick touch-up is all that's called for. For grey-skinned Nebari Gigi Edgley (right), they break out the airbrush.



great about it all. She used great big black contacts that we actually had in stock."

Vanderwalt did not work on the characters with prosthetics, like D'Argo. She tried to achieve different looks using colors and textures. An example of another challenge for her was the character of Volmae in "Thank God It's Friday. Again." She said, "She was all white, opalescent white, had veins coming through the white. We would paint all the veins on her first, airbrush her pale, and then do an opalescent pattern over the top, once again using stencils, and white wigs with white dreadlocks. We did red eyes on her. There is only so much you can do with a person's face before you go

to prosthetics. That was always the hard thing.”

The look of the Peacekeepers, especially Claudia Black’s Aeryn, was initially dictated by the fact that the actors were working on other roles at the time. Noted Vanderwalt, “The ponytail came about because it was something that we had to do. Most of the people that were Peacekeepers were in other shows, and Claudia was still shooting another film, *PITCH BLACK*, when she started with us on *FARSCAPE*. So we had to keep her hair the same as they were using it in *PITCH BLACK*. They have long hair. We can’t leave it loose and curly. It would be better if it were pulled back and tightly strapped with rubber. We looked at what was in their costumes. I worked together a lot with Terry Ryan, wherever I could combine something they’d used in the making of their costumes into the makeup of whatever we did. I think I probably worked more closely with Terry than anyone else on the shoot, with color and texture and things like that.”

Vanderwalt left *FARSCAPE* after season one. She went on to work on *MOULIN ROUGE* and then *STAR WARS*. She did enjoy her time on *FARSCAPE*, and she said, “It was such a creative thing to work on. You went into a meeting about the next episode, and that was usually in a week’s time. You had a week to get together whatever you could, and that really tested the boundaries. It was great. You had to pull things out of thin air, really.”

Paul Pattison took over as makeup and hair supervisor for season two, and will continue on into season three. He had previously worked as key makeup artist for *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 2*. He echoed some of Vanderwalt’s statements, saying, “This is a high, fast-moving show. I’ve done some pretty major films that have taken a lot of time to get done. I have never worked on something that calls for such different looks all the time, and very intense makeups in a very short amount of time, and such a high turnover. I think the whole show just runs so quickly, you don’t have time to look

back. You are always looking forward, trying to chase yourself to make sure you are ready for the next episode.”

For Pattison, the Zhaan and Chiana makeups were already there and his responsibility was to make sure the look was maintained. He said, “Funny enough, the Zhaan and the Chiana makeups, because they are established looks, and there is a formula to the makeup, once that formula is put in place it’s not that difficult to do. The most difficult thing in those makeups is maintaining the look, day-in and day-out, making sure that the makeup is done exactly the same every day. The actual application of the makeup actually becomes quite easy.

“The hardest makeups to do are the secondary makeups that come in on each episode, where there is an idea of what they want to have, a new look. You’ve probably only got less than a week turnaround. You might see the actor, have a day to play with the makeup and get an idea together, then you have another day to try and fine-tune it. By the third day you are actually in front of cameras, so hopefully you’ve got it right.”

Pattison’s first big challenge was in “Taking the Stone,” where all the young people on the cemetery planet needed an appropriate makeup. Even Chiana needed a change. Said Pattison, “In ‘Taking The Stone,’ we literally had three days to actually get that together. Once Rowan, the director, gave a brief about where these people were supposed to be from, we came up with an idea that they were these funky young kids who don’t give a damn about everything, and based it on a parallel to the way kids are now. At the moment, there is a big push on kids wearing Asian tattoos, so we got the tattoo thing happening. Instead of going Asian, all the tattoos that we used on the kids were authentic Celtic designs. They wanted their hair to be dreadlocky, and matted, like they don’t wash. We took it a step further and used a look that is used in countries where tribes plait their hair



ABOVE: Claudia Black goes under the brush. Thanks to acquiring her role while simultaneously shooting *PITCH BLACK*, she managed to keep her hairstyle.

full of mud. They wanted a different skin tone, so going with all the brown colors we were using, we used a bronzy color. If we had weeks to actually come up with another idea, we could have done something a lot different. But I think we got a look that actually worked for them. It was also an opportunity to take Chiana and do something with her look. It’s a hard thing to change, that Chiana look. We were able to lose the wig that she usually wears, and use her own hair, covered in mud, and give her kind of a quite interesting look to blend in with the other characters.”

The next big group of makeups involved the Sebacean descendants on the planet in the “Look At The Princess” trilogy. Recalled Pattison, “They visit a place that has kind of a more humanoid-looking people. We went for a Japanese kind of look, where they are pale looking, and pinky looking, and give an Oriental feel to the whole thing, because the sets were very white and pink. There is a definite theme there in that episode. But there was a lot of work. We were working flat-out every day.”

When the two-parter was made into three parts, David Kemper wrote the role of the alien ro-NA for Francesca Buller, Ben Browder’s wife. Said Pattison, “We made her into a little green monster. That was very challenging because we only had a day to come up with something. When you see the episode, she actually looks like she is wearing a prosthetic but she is not. It is all air-

brushed makeup, to give a 3D effect. The feedback from the people on that episode was that they were very happy with that particular character. I must admit, it’s a very interesting look, a cross between a Martian and a 1930’s Japanese sci-fi look, very retro. You wouldn’t even recognize her to be who she was.”

Pattison admitted that the actors coming to work on *FARSCAPE* are often in for a surprise. He said, “Most actors who are coming in to play their character, come in and say, ‘This is how I feel the character is. This is how I am going to play the character, and this is how I feel it’s going to be on screen.’ Usually as a makeup person you go, ‘I’ll accommodate where you are coming from as a character.’ But in our instance, we listen to them and then we say, ‘Would you mind just waiting until we do the makeup, and then rediscover your character, because I think you are going to be in for a bit of a shock.’ Nine times out of ten, the actor will go, ‘I could not even imagine myself looking like this.’ They reinvent their character, their voices and everything. They go onto a new path where they can take themselves. They just shake their heads, because they had got no idea that’s how much they can be transformed.”

Pattison is ready for the next season saying, “I’ve got a great team of people that can work very fast. Usually you find people have run out of energy, but on this one, everyone has kept the energy up.” □

FARSCAPE

Costume Designer Terry Ryan

The Universe is His to Garb. The Fine Art of Keeping It Alien, but Real.

By Anna L. Kaplan

Costume designer Terry Ryan, along with makeup and hair su-

pervisor Lesley Vanderwalt and supervisor of The Creature Shop, Dave Elsey, was responsible for creating the look of the beings

NOTHING MORE BEAUTIFUL: The "Look at the Princess" trilogy demonstrated costuming's ability to convey mood through clothing.



populating the FARSCAPE universe. He continued through the first two seasons and will be returning for the third. With extensive experience in feature films—including *THE YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY* (1982), *MURIEL'S WEDDING* (1994), and *CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION* (1996)—Ryan receives praise from everyone he works with.

He started back at the beginning of FARSCAPE. Remembered Ryan, "I came in about four months before we actually started to shoot. I think I had about a month to mull it over at home. I went into the studios and started work about sixteen weeks before we started shooting."

They did not yet know what the characters were going to look like. Said Ryan, "We had a personality profile of them. The D'Argo character, because his prosthetics were coming from London, I'd only seen them in the embryonic form, with no color or tattoos, just this sculpt that was going to be D'Argo. He sort of evolved, started off being like a Scottish warrior, then a bit Samurai. I think we ended up with a combination of both. He's got a prosthetic top half of his body, shoulders and chest. The costume is slightly padded, quilted, very much like a Japanese martial arts costume. It has that slight cotton padding so it's got a bit of bounce. We also did that to give him some bulk, and to give the costume some textures, it's not just a flat surface. The Zhaan

character, the blue woman, was a long drawn-out makeup test. I was waiting until they got the skin tone right and all that before we did anything like actually manufacture a costume. It was always going to be this sort of priestess, ethereal-type person. We always knew she was going to be flowing and soft."

The Peacekeeper uniforms evolved. Noted Ryan, "The thing to fight against is,—We're doing sci-fi. Let's make them all big and like robots, stalking around—I think our world of sci-fi is a bit more romantic. Bad guys have got to be in black—that sort of Nazi, want-to-take-over-the-world thing—and black and red, that also came from the sets. Ricky wanted to do a lot of black and red. Panels of red, and you put that black in front of it, it's quite good. It also keeps them really clean and tailored."

Ryan added the long coats. He said, "It gives people movement, when they charge around and run around. It gives the actual character more animation, just by walking. It's got power to it, that sort of trench coat thing."

What are the Peacekeeper costumes made of? "A lot of leather," said Ryan. "That's good, because you get a finish on it that doesn't necessarily make it look leather. It looks like a man-made, sci-fi fabric. But it molds to the body—if you wear it long enough, it sort of starts to get the shape of the body. They look nicer, they look sexier than other sorts of

stretchy, normal sci-fi, STAR TREK-y things. They look more lived-in and practical. You want to think that these people don't just mix around in a spaceship, they actually go out there and do something.

"Just the nature of the show, everything they wear has to be practical. They have to be able to roll around, they have to be able to jump and leap and fight. We've tried to build any padding that they need into the costume itself to cover set fighting—they can put this protective garment on every day. For big stunts, they don't have to be massively padded underneath, or things like that. It makes it easier for the actors—they feel more powerful once they put it on, I hope."

One of the challenges in the first season included the gigantic Namtar from "DNA Mad Scientist." Said Ryan, "The DNA scientist was pretty good—a big prosthetic job that had like a silver caliper that held his whole body in, and leg extensions. He took a lot of work and a lot of people.

That was totally divided between Creature Shop and costume, which is a nice way to work. You both have ideas, you put them all together, you end up with a better project than just one person struggling over it."

As with many of the crew, Ryan loves working on Wayne Pygram as Scorpius. He laughed, "Old Scorpie, he's pretty good. He's like an insect in some ways. We thought about him when Dave was doing his face, before we got into the actual costuming. Because his face is pale and like uncooked dough, I just had this fantasy that maybe if he ever took that skin-tight suit off, he'd ooze. The suit is sort of holding him all together, and that's why he's got all the strapping over his face and his arms. The suit holds him together. If you undo that, he goes into this blob."

Thinking up those kind of ideas is what keeps everyone

going. Said Ryan, "It's weird. It's pushing you to the limits. It's not doing crinolines and corsets, I'm here to tell you."

At some point it was time for a costume change. Said David Kemper, "Terry Ryan, the wardrobe guy, comes in and says, 'I've decided that Crichton and Aeryn need to be in more leather.' We all went, 'All right.' And he went, 'Good.' And he walked out. That was it. Then all of a sudden we had these phenomenal leather costumes. We didn't ask for them. This is the genius."

Ryan really wanted to get Crichton and Aeryn into different

she'd always done all her life, she'd been told to do. She'd been under orders. All of a sudden, she thinks for herself and looks after herself. So of course she gets freer with the way she looks and acts.

"In the second series, too, we go into another grade of Peacekeepers:



NEXT ON FARSCAPE: A wardrobe re-design for the newly wealthy Crichton and Aeryn.

ly off the wall."

For "Look At The Princess" Ryan created some beautiful costumes, in whites for the people on the royal planet, and in red, silky-satin for the wedding party. He said, "We did a big wedding, a planet of royalty which was actually quite nice. They are all sort of white and floaty and totally different than all the hard-edged stuff we've been doing with everyone else."

He also enjoyed the surgeon's assistant from the last episode. Ryan noted, "There is a great character who's sort of a doctor's assistant. He looks pretty fab. His costume is like a cross between a corset and a frock. He's a big guy, and he's all sort of strapped in and laced in, sort of bits of flesh oozing out, and it's got a big skirt. He eats constantly, so he's got this skirt that's all made up of pockets. All the pockets are full of food, like cream cakes and chocolate chip cookies."

Season three looks like it will be fun for Ryan, as the group can acquire more clothes with their newfound riches. Said Ryan, "Claudia's got an even better costume for the third series. They all get rich in the third series. God knows what will happen then." □

costumes. He said, "Crichton, he comes there and he's got his silly little flying suit on. They are on a Peacekeeper ship, there must be remnants of Peacekeepers there. They also travel. They kill people and steal their clothes. So they have become like marauders and pirates in a way. We just needed to give Crichton a harder edge as he became more in control of the situation. I think, because the characters go into other situations, you have to give them protective clothing, or warmer clothing. They go to commerce planets, they trade. There must be some way that they can build up a wardrobe."

Claudia Black as Aeryn looks fabulous in the second season. Laughed Ryan, "That took awhile. I think something like this has to grow as the storylines grow. She's coming from the Peacekeepers. She was really regimented, was bred to be a Peacekeeper. Everything

the officers. We've only had Crais and a couple of assistants, mainly soldiers or marauders or storm troopers, that sort of thing. In the second series we introduce Braca and his crowd, who are like the officers, so they are much sleeker and don't do much dirty work—they just cruise around and get the lackeys to do all the nasty stuff. The costumes are more tailored."

Ryan also enjoyed the wackiness of FARSCAPE's second season, including putting aliens in human clothes for "Won't Get Fooled Again." He said, "We did one in the second series where they are sort of in a pretend return-to-Earth, but it's sort of a heightened reality that has our people being normal humans, earthlings. It's really good, very off-the-wall. But that's the thing about the whole series: It's not played in a true, science fiction genre thing. It's very, very broad, and complete-

FARSCAPE

Composer

Guy Gross

A classical composer on scoring in a digital age.

By Anna L. Kaplan

For FARSCAPE's first season, the music was handled by SubVision. For the second season, the producers approached classical composer Guy Gross, who had already scored the trailer that was shown to advertise FARSCAPE before it started airing.

Said Gross, "I am a very traditional, classical composer. I have a background in classical music. I think they brought me on for a more traditional approach to scoring a sci-fi series. There was no specific, 'Please do this. Don't do that.' There was just, 'We'd like you to work on the film the way you work.' Before the first season began there was a teaser that I had scored for them, and they particularly liked that approach: large; orchestral; very traditional."

Gross actually started his FARSCAPE stint with the episode, "The Way We Weren't."

He was already scoring the film CUT on the Fox lot in Australia, close to the editing facilities for FARSCAPE. He recalled, "I set up a scoring suite on the lot which has worked out terrifically. They are doing the audio post-production on the Fox lot at a facility called SoundFirm. I get the director's cut to get a feel for what is coming up. Then I get a fine cut, and I get about two weeks to score."

"The nice thing about being on the lot here is access to the directors, because generally they are editing their episodes, not far away. I really get a very good understanding from the directors of what they had in mind when they were directing their particular ep. It is valuable for me to know what their vision was in a particular sequence. Certainly the directors are on board for the

sound brief. I have insisted that they come to my studio once and hopefully twice before the final mix to hear what I have done."

Gross would probably be best known to

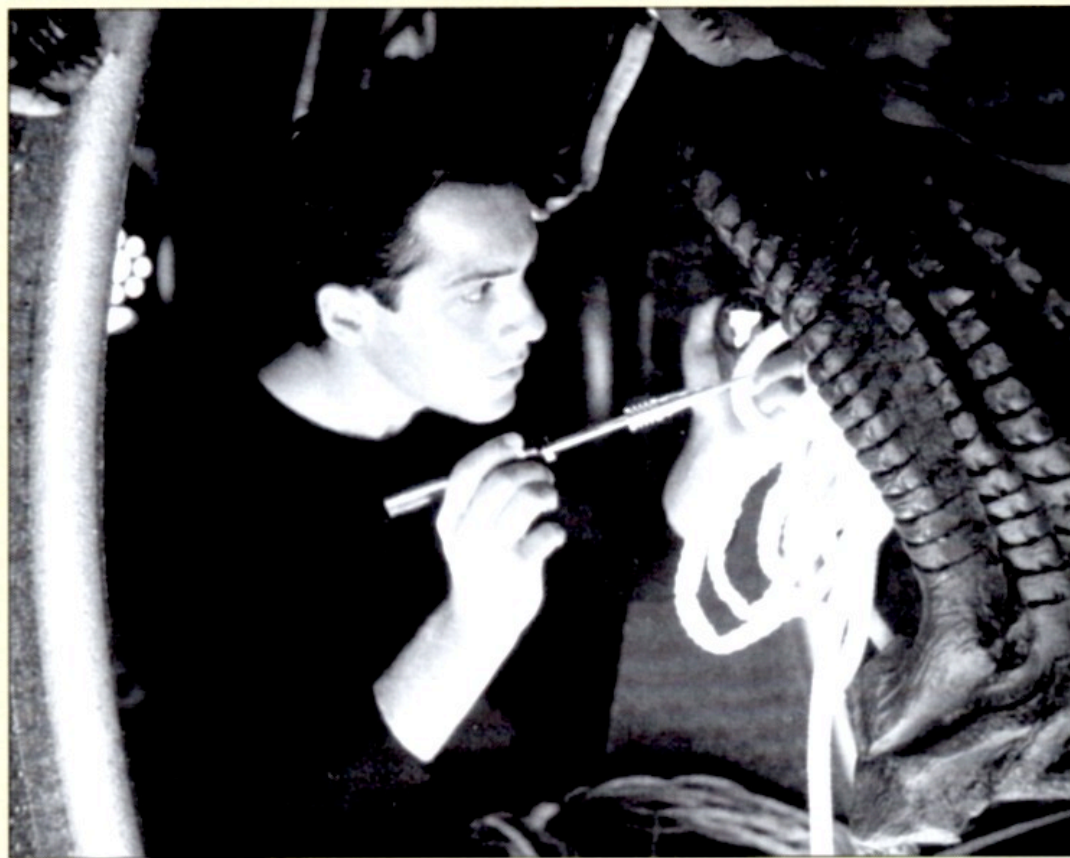
completely in the ether.

"The scary thing is that sometimes you are expected to perform quicker than your mind has time to process, because the technology can deal with it. In the old days, even just asking for a transfer of what you were doing would take a few hours to set up. But today, everything is expected to be done on the spot. It's lucky that I have always found that what slows me down is the pencil and paper. I think faster than I write. As fast as I can think it, I can create it. It's terrific because I literally hear the end result as I create it."

Gross tried to create a seamless transition between the different musical backgrounds as he started scoring, but some fans did notice a difference. He said, "With the second series of FARSCAPE I've been having a lot of fun, and I know that my directors and producers are very pleased with the direction I am taking it. I even recall a little bit of gossip on the

Net. Some of the pundits noticed that the score has changed a bit. I got one quite hilarious e-mail from one of the fans, demanding a better understand of why we made the change, to which I am very tight-lipped. It was a decision obviously of the producers. But I am enjoying it. It is a terrific series for a composer. It takes you from emotional highs to lows, so it couldn't be more exciting to work on. If I play my cards right maybe I'll be able to do series three. I'm certainly putting my hand up as a potential."

In the meantime, a FARSCAPE CD was released by GNP Crescendo Records, featuring both SubVision and Guy Gross' work from Seasons One and Two. The CD includes the memorable main theme. It can be obtained from Crescendo at www.gnpcrescendo.com. □



LUSH LIFE: FARSCAPE viewers got their first taste of Guy Gross' orchestral style in "The Way We Weren't."

American audiences as the composer for THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT (1994) and FOREVER FEVER (1998). Although he is a classical composer, the growth of the all-digital studio means that he is often working by himself. He explained, "I am a loner. Because this is done with samples, I use software called Digital Performer, and I am a one-stop-shop. Even though I have a classical background, I can compose, arrange. I even have just enough engineering skills to be able to take the whole thing to its final mix, musically speaking, and deliver. These days everything is digitally delivered on a CD-ROM. That just slots right into the technology of the audio post-production. Nothing ever touches any physical tape. It's just

FARSCAPE: THE NOVEL

House of Cards

Popular TV tie-in novelist Keith R.A. DeCandido lobbied hard to take on the FARSCAPE series.

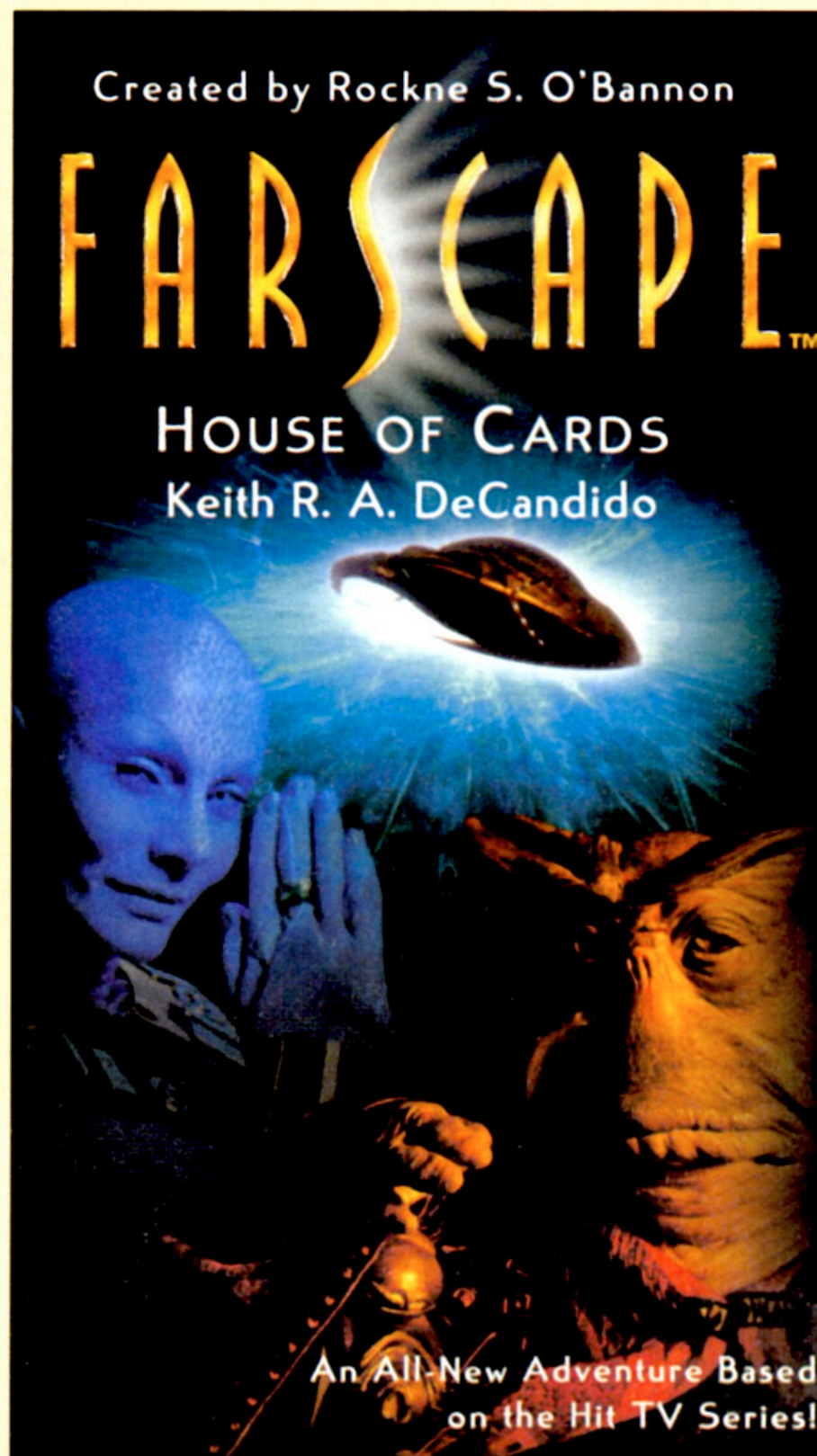
By Anna L. Kaplan

As FARSCAPE increases in popularity, so does demand for items that extend the television experience, including trading cards, action figures, and now, novels. Three have been commissioned for Tor Books in the United States, and Boxtree in the UK, with *Farscape: House of Cards*, written by Keith R.A. DeCandido, the latest to be released.

DeCandido's name will be familiar to many readers of television tie-in fiction. He has written novels set in the BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, and YOUNG HERCULES universes, amongst others. Why take on FARSCAPE? "I'm very much a fan of the TV show," DeCandido said. "I wouldn't have lobbied so hard to write one of the books if I wasn't. The connection was through Greg Cox at Tor, actually. He and I have worked together many times in the past, and I lobbied him very forcefully to do a FARSCAPE book. He recommended me to Boxtree. They looked at my proposal, and everyone liked it.

"The two things I like most about [the series] are the characters, who are endlessly fascinating and are developing very well as the show progresses, and the way they take the hoariest of SF cliches and turn them on their ear. The writing is wonderfully clever. I think the moment that sold me on the show was the climax of 'A Human Reaction,' when John, suspecting that the world he was in was a fake created from his own memories, confirms it by opening the door to the women's room of a bar. He'd never been in there, so the aliens who created the world had no point of reference from which to create it. It was a brilliantly simple plot twist. At that point, I fell in love with the show."

Unlike the other writers working on



FARSCAPE novels, DeCandido needed no guidelines to come up with his own ideas. He said, "I have never spoken with Rockne O'Bannon, actually. I understand the other two authors did speak to him, but I only dealt with the licensing folks at the Jim Henson Company. Sure hope he likes the book..."

Rygel is the engine that gets *Farscape: House of Cards* underway. Said DeCandido

of story, which takes place in between the second season episodes "Won't Get Fooled Again" and "The Locket," "The crew travels to a gambling planet hoping to restock, re-supply, and have some fun. Rygel manages to lose Moya in a card game, which forces the crew to work to pay off the debt. However, more is at stake than a simple gambling debt. There's political intrigue, betrayal, high adventure, lots of danger, and a very real threat of capture by the Peacekeepers. Everyone plays a role in the story. Rygel's actions catalyze the plot, but I made a conscious effort to have it be an ensemble piece. Trust me, everyone has something to do."

DeCandido explained what an author can accomplish that a TV crew can't: "The main things that prose can do that television can't are interior monologue and point of view. You can get inside the characters' heads. Each scene in *House of Cards* is from a particular character's POV, and all of the regulars get at least one scene, even Pilot. Books also have an unlimited special effects budget, so there's all sorts of things you can do that the show can't afford, though I have to say that Henson's Creature Shop sets that particular bar very high. The sets and aliens on this show are phenomenally cinematic, and hard to live up to in prose."

There is a possibility that DeCandido will be doing a short story for a FARSCAPE magazine in the UK. As to future FARSCAPE books, nothing is known yet. Said DeCandido, "At the moment, Boxtree only has the license for three, and they're assigned. I'd love to do more. I hope that these three books do well enough to get the license renewed and that I'm asked to do more."

Expect to see *FARSCAPE: House of Cards* out in the UK, March 2001, and in the US, May of 2001. □

Ang Lee on

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON

How a Director Famed for Observational Drama Succeeded in Putting the Art into Martial Arts.

By Mitch Persons

Sony Pictures Classics/Columbia Pictures Film Production, Asia's CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON touts itself as a martial arts film. In a sense it is, but that is not all it is. A beautifully-mounted fairy-tale set against the backdrop of Qing dynasty China, the film, produced by James Schamus, David Linde, Bill Kong, Hsu Li Kong, and Ang Lee, written by Wang Hui Ling, Tasi Kuo Jung, and Schamus, and directed with an incredibly gentle and reserved touch by Lee (SENSE AND SENSIBILITY, THE ICE STORM, RIDE WITH THE DEVIL), tells the relatively simple tale of a sword called The Green Destiny. A magical, mystical weapon which is supposed to contain the secrets of life itself, it intertwines the lives of Li Mu Bai (Chow Yun Fat,) a famous martial arts master, Yu Shu Lien (Michelle Yeoh), his former love, Jen Yu (Zhang Ziyi), a beautiful, strong-willed young girl, and Jade Fox, an enigmatic bandit.

The action scenes—most of them surprisingly devoid of bloodletting, and refreshingly egalitarian in their configurations—are balletically choreographed by Yuen Wo-Ping. But it is actually what comes between the battles that makes the film so mesmerizing. Jen falls for a dashing desert outlaw named Lo (Chang Chen.) Their love scenes, which take place in what is supposed to be a cave in the Gobi Desert, and are photographed in a soft, earth-warmed light, are both sensuous and unabashedly romantic. There is a segment involving Jen and Li which, in its execution, unfolds like the proverbial midsummer night's dream: Li and the girl have matured to such a point in their art that the laws of nature no longer apply to them. They partic-

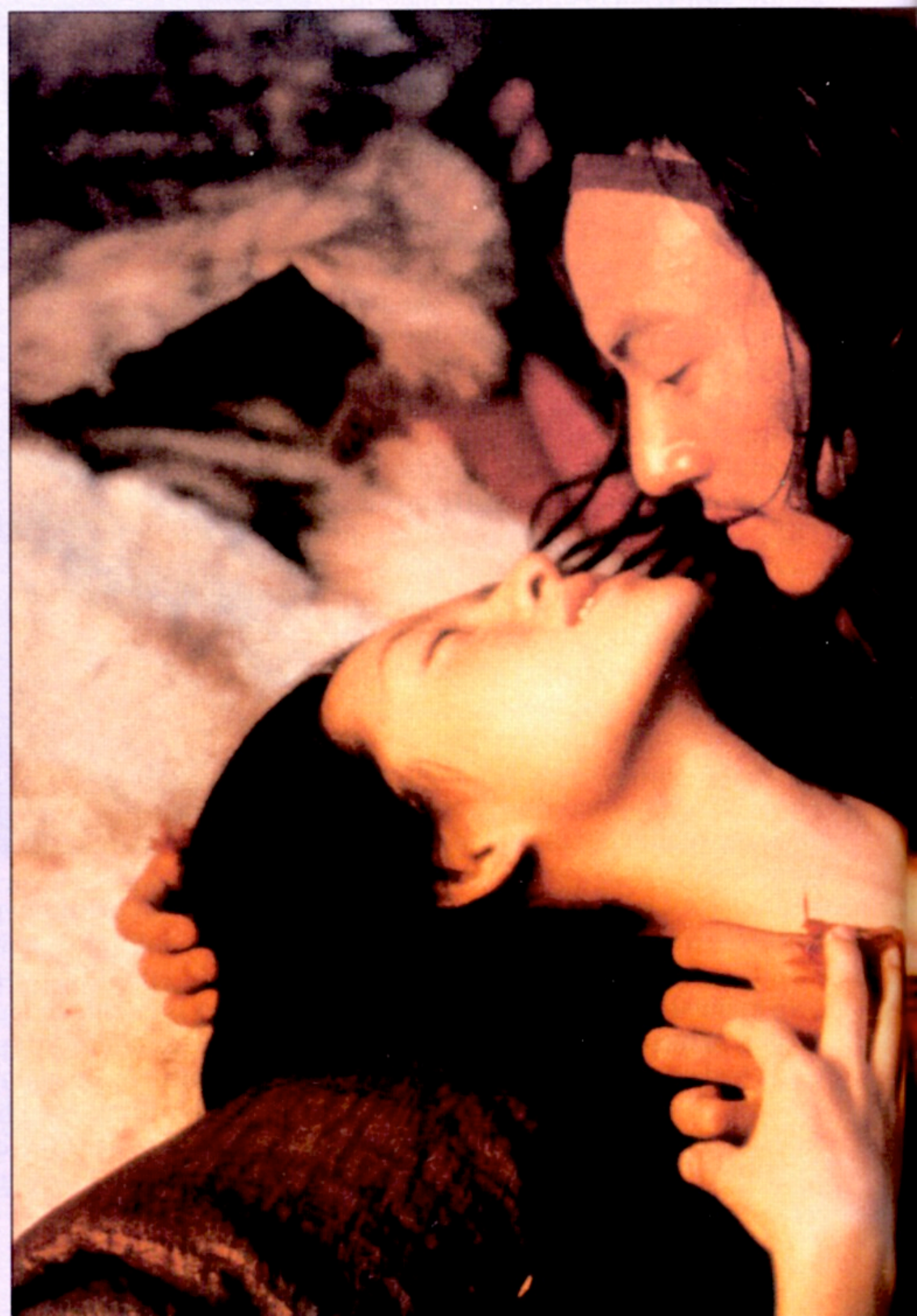
ipate in a battle—more of wits than of fists—in which the two, finding themselves in a forest of gently swaying willows, literally fly up and onto the delicate branches. While floating feather-like from tree to tree, the combatants exchange ideologies, eventually forming a bond which is a crucial turning point in the story.

Talking with CROUCHING TIGER'S Taiwanese director Lee was almost like being in the presence of a modern, transcendental master. Seated on a couch in a suite in the LeMeridien Hotel in Los Angeles, the casually-dressed Lee often appeared to be gathering his thoughts together. He spoke hesitantly, softly—so softly, in fact, that several times he was asked to repeat himself. Then, eyes shining, he would arrive at the gist of his meditations, becoming animated and joyful, his voice rising several decibels. Every now and then, he offered a light, almost ethereal chuckle.

How did he come up with the idea for the film? "CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON comes from the fourth part of a five-part novel by Wang Du

Lu. The title refers to something else that may be going on under a proper societal surface.

"I always liked this writer and the old-fashioned, nostalgic way he approached classic Chinese culture. There is a degree of realism to his work—it doesn't go too



crazy, too out of bounds. It has outstanding female characters and it has a tragic ending, both of which are unusual for a martial arts story.

"The novel is what is known as a *wuxia* [pronounced woo-sha] tale. *Wu* means military, martial. *Xia* means the knight, the rightful warrior, therefore a *wuxia* is like a samurai, or knight-errant, but he is different from the samurai or knight-errant because a *wuxia* is not a class, or it's not a job. The *wuxia* see themselves as people with mighty power and military skills. They have a lot of enlightenment for justice, for helping other people. They see their own lives as very little, but other people's business as very important. A 'warrior with righteousness' is what it is, but free in style. They're more like the Western movie loner, than the samurai-type knight-errant, who works for the government, the church. Wanderers, drifters. In the book, both Li Mu Bai, and the woman Yu Shu Lien, are of the *wuxia*.

"Making **CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON**

into a film was a long-time dream. It seems from my childhood I've wanted to do it. The storytelling really grabbed me. Of course, it's a fantasy. It's a fantasy about power, morality, about romance, about enlightenment. It always stayed with me, but I never got a chance to do it. As I was growing up a film student, choreographers such as Yuen Wo-Ping were very strong in the genre of the martial arts film. They became pretty great filmmakers, com-

didn't just come up right away and start to do it. Little by little, I was moving towards it.

"Some things, of course, I had done before. But I'd never done martial art before, and it was a stress, because when you do something you're not familiar with, you try to push people in a different direction from their habits. Something new might happen, but also you can make a fool out of yourself. You might waste a lot of time, cause a

THE HEART IN THE ART: As the driven Jen, Zhang Ziyi gets to show her passion in traditional forms (right), and in more subdued settings (below, with Chang Chen).



binning Chinese opera and action film shooting, and they created something really exciting.

"The film language itself, the fantasy storytelling always had a big influence on me. It's the 'hidden dragon' in me. It's the hidden pleasure for me. I think making the American films that I did, that kind of knowledge and experience, really helped me to engage in that kind of filmmaking, so in terms of the martial arts cinema, I was a novice on many levels. Most of the time I was learning. I was conservative, a shy person, so it took me little-by-little to get here. I

lot of pain, because you are in transition.

"A director is a big factor to anybody. When a company takes you in as a director, they are bound to have some things change. What I'm trying to say is that I was learning and giving direction at the same time, and it was tricky, a very tricky position. At least a third of the shooting was like that, but then I gradually grabbed the essence, and I found that I was more at ease with people. Before that, it was very uncomfortable. But I think that sometimes good things come up from that—fresh things. It's very educational, but I think those experiences, which really stretch your abilities, and your tension with people, it tends to inspire you, not only in learning what you're doing, but learning of life. It's part of growth. It's an experience I really cherish.

"In telling a sensitive human story you have to put all ego aside, because you are creating something for a massive audience. That's a big responsibility. Sometimes you have to put the 'you' aside and take everything in and see what happens. That has been my experience, but I think it's an overall experience, and not just learning the skills of filmmaking. I take this approach in

my films, but also as a person. That is how I live my life. It is all about learning.”

The character of Jen Yu appears to be Lee’s film alter ego. She is always in a state of flux, always trying, always testing. “Yes,” agrees Lee, “Jen is a person who doesn’t always have all the answers at her fingertips. Of course, she is 18 years-old, but she also is something of an upstart. She doesn’t always know the jungle rules. She keeps making trouble. There is one part of the story where Jen steals The Green Destiny and then runs away from an arranged marriage to be with Lo, the man she loves. Li tries to find her, but Jen, disguised as a boy, is taking refuge at a tavern, and is causing all kinds of trouble. She gets into a fight with a group of gangsters, and defeats them all.

“The rest of the film is pretty serious, so this part is almost like a comedy relief. All the characters, their names, the way they hold themselves, it’s so typical of a martial arts film. It’s a stereotype. And Jen is like the

Tasmanian Devil, whooshing through the whole thing, and making fools out of everyone, this young little girl. Even the set-up, the tavern fight, it’s like a Western tavern fight. It always seems to happen, because it makes for great staging—second decks, lots of falls, broken railings, tables, dishes getting smashed. There was a chance to make a twist there, to see this young girl instead of a man doing it. It was a great chance to mock the other mediocre elements, all the clichés in the genre, both literature and movie, and in a male-

dominant society.”

The fights that Lee speaks of, although alive with violent movement, are not themselves violent. “I think,” Lee continues, “most of the fights in this film have a purpose that’s unlike most martial arts things—about anger, hatred, vengeance. They are not about anger. They are about teaching, about pursuing, or dealing with frustrations.

“Jen is frustrated in a sense because she is a very possessive young woman. She pursues The Green Destiny with a fever in her blood. Her first confrontation with Lo, the desert bandit, is when he steals a small

ENJOYING THE VIEW: Stunning visuals (Zhang Ziyi and Chang Chen check out the scenery below) mix with traditional martial arts (Michelle Yeoh in action, lower left) in Ang Lee’s elegant **CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON**.



jade comb from her. She pursues that comb the way she pursues the sword.

“Now, you can take that comb as being symbolic of her virginity, or whatever, but I think in the long run, it is the fact that somebody is attempting to take something that she considers hers away from her. The comb, by the way, is something that appears frequently in Chinese storytelling. We’re not the type of people who are very good at verbalizing love, even in literature, and so a comb is something, a souvenir, that is kept as a signal, as a sign of connection. To

me, though, it's possessive material. It's something that Jen likes, nobody will take it from her. Anything she wants, she'll pursue. Same thing with the sword. She takes action, even though the action may not have positive results for her."

Very earthy elements, all. But what about the fantasy parts of the story, the flying, for instance? "As long as there has been Chinese film," Lee chuckles, "there has been such a thing. It was from the original novels. And it's not really flying. It's a weightless leaping. When somebody's transcendent, enlightened, they get rid of a lot of their self-tensions. They're able to focus in one direction, generate tremendous power, tremendous enlightenment: Take a breath, and do the leap. It's actually just like one notch up from the Chinese philosophy. It is giving away your self-tension and emotion and entanglement. You can be enlightened and obtain bigger power and end up at the transcendental eternity feeling. The weightless leaping is not about agility only."

Woven into this tapestry of possessiveness and metaphysical enlightenment are the relationships between Li Mu Bai and Yu Shu Lien and Jen Yu and Lo, and the mysterious comings and goings of Jade Fox. Said Lee, "The love between Li and Yu was only incidental in the book. I beefed up their story somewhat. In the film, Yu and Li have affection for each other. They were close friends, but she was engaged since childhood to another man, Li's brother, by oath. Then the fiance died in a duel, but Li felt he was obliged to keep his honor and not make a move on Yu. There was tacit understanding. They have love for each other, but they were never lovers. Another character that was beefed up by me was Jade Fox, who played only a small part in the novel."

"The main story is that of Jen. In some ways, it is what can be called a coming of age story. Jen remains a petulant, headstrong girl until the very end, when tragedy strikes, and she suddenly becomes this almost martyred figure. She has tasted the complexity of life. She's aware that there's no answer to the enigmatic paradox of life. She is confused. To me that is the ultimate coming of age—the loss of everything. It's too much for her to comprehend."

"Even Jen's last scene with Lo has this feeling of loss to it, at least for him. When she sees Lo after being away for a long time, she is so much ahead of their romance, she's so much deeper into life, so much touched by a tragedy, so much into

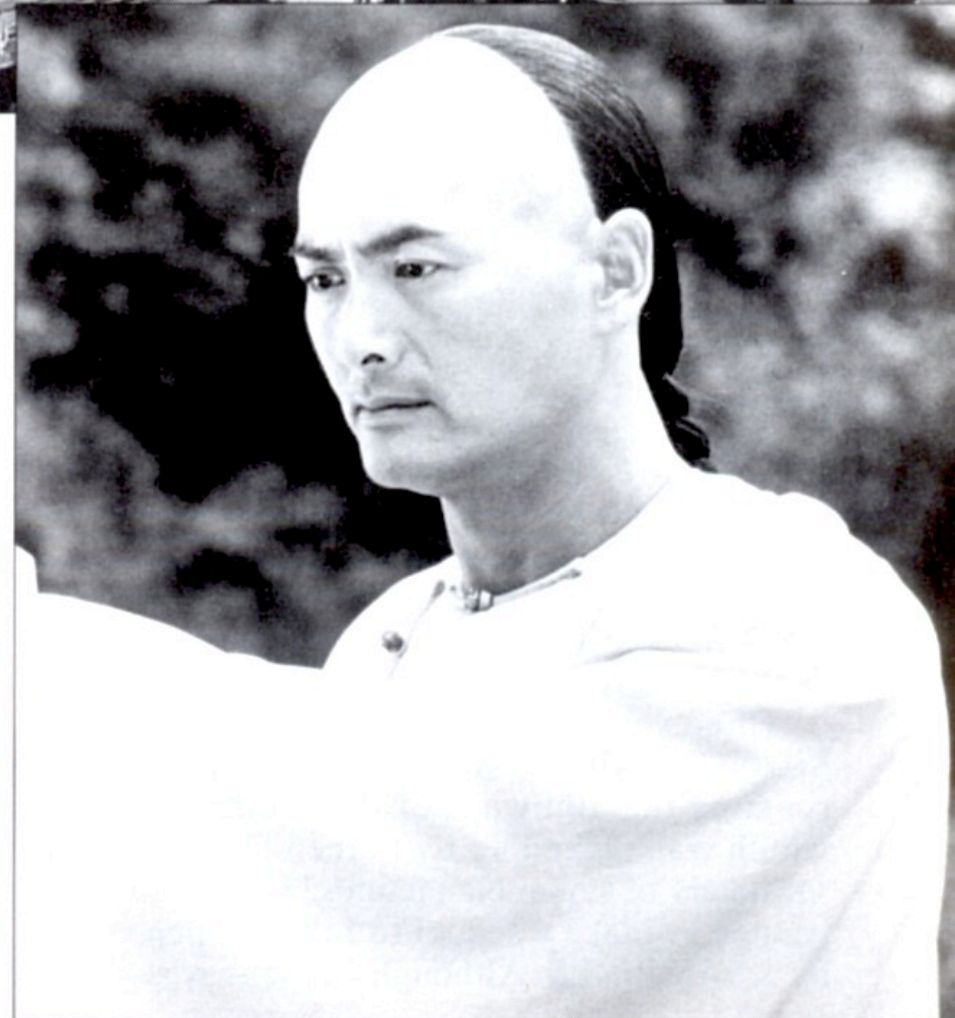
the debt she owes to Li and Yu, who started out as enemies, but then became friends, that she has gone beyond her love for Lo. I think, at the point she reencounters Lo, there are more important things in her life, and in her mind. To me, she gets more intense, so it would be a step backward rather than forward to get together with this man again. Lo was her first taste of romantic love, but Jen's stage of life just then is so deep that it is more overwhelming than her wanting to be with Lo. Of course she does feel for him,



STAR POWER: Setting romantic drama against martial arts action, Ang Lee relied upon the name-value of such stars as Michelle Yeoh (above) and Chow Yun Fat (below). Right: Director Lee on location.

but at this point I think she has a bigger picture, has bigger things than a personal love relationship in mind."

The toned-down ending of *CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON* is once again a twist on the martial arts films. Lee was asked if he thought all these variances were going to affect the popularity of his film. "I feel confident that in the art houses it should do very well. I don't know if it will go beyond the subtitle barrier, go to the multiplexes. I hope it will. I think it's a genuine movie experience. I think a lot of people are going to see it. I hope so. I don't know. It's never really been done before." □



THE FORSAKEN

VAMPIRES HIT THE ROAD IN JOE CARDONE'S RAUNCHY RETAKE ON NEAR DARK.

By Dan Scapperotti

Just when you thought the vampire film had shown us every variation, filmmaker Joe Cardone has come up with a new twist. During the great battle of Antioch in the eleventh century, over 200 French crusaders were slaughtered by the Turks. As night fell, only nine knights remained. Abaddon, the angel of Hell, made the nine survivors a deal for eternal life, a deal eight of them couldn't refuse. The dreadful pact was sealed by killing the sole holdout and drinking his blood. Horrified and shame-ridden, the eight ran from each other, doomed to wander the earth alone with an unquenchable thirst for blood, destined to infect anyone from whom they drank. These were the Forsaken. Fortunately, for the victim, there is a way back.

Forsaking his own degree in political science from the Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Cardone took to the theater. He tutored under Lonny Elder, the black playwright who penned *SOUNDER*. After three years as a playwright in residence at the Company of Angels, Cardone turned his talents to the movie screen. In 1980 he directed his own screenplay for *SLAYER* which was followed by such films as *THUNDER ALLEY*, *SHADOWZONE*, *SHADOWHUNTER* and *CRASH AND BURN*. In 1996 he wrote and produced *EXIT IN RED* for Showtime.

Three years ago, Cardone made *OUTSIDE OZONE*, the story of a serial killer roaming the highways of the southwest, which was picked up by Screen Gems, a subsidiary of Columbia Pictures. The studio wanted to make a sequel to John Carpenter's *VAMPIRES*. Although Cardone was-

n't interested in the sequel, he pitched his own tale of modern day vampires who use America's highways as their feeding grounds, *THE FORSAKEN*.

"I had always wanted to cross-pollinate genres," said Cardone. "I like what they did with *NEAR DARK*. I wanted to make a vampire road movie. In [*NEAR DARK*,] they traveled a bit, but they really came into this town and stayed there. I had this idea of vampires sleeping in the trunk of their cars during the day. They have a driver not unlike the original story's Renfield character: a guy who's not a vampire and is their day-driver. It's a real, cruising, road movie."

Simon Rex plays Pen, Cardone's Renfield. Pen, who is a bit dimwitted, can telepathically hear Kit—one of the original Forsaken and leader of his clan—and the others. "He talks out loud back to them," Cardone explained. "He's pretty much of a fuck up but he's more the natural born killer. He hangs with them because there's a lot of dropped-off sex around him. He's a really sick individual. They're in a souped-up, sixties Charger primed out. It's very hip, but gritty, like *VAMPIRES MEETS BADLANDS*, or *IN COLD BLOOD*."

The studio gave the filmmaker the green light with Cardone at the helm. "Not that I don't like the old, Vlad-the-Impaler concept," Cardone insists, "I love vampire movies; they work on a great premise, a great human, dramatic concept. I wanted to take it off on another tangent, and we did. There are no fangs in this film. They're blood-letters: They lap blood, they don't suck it, they don't kill in that form. They use guns and knives. They'll run somebody down or set them on fire if they have to. There's a little different bent to them."

The bizarre Goth movement, a book by Aphrodite Jones several years ago, and news stories sparked the director's imagination. "Kids were getting heavily into the Goth thing," he said, "and there was a natural progression that led them into vampirism and that sort of thing. There was a group of kids that were doing this all over the US. In Florida some high school age kids were actually letting blood. They were taking razors and cutting small slices in their skin and trading blood. Eventually it led to the killing of a family and they were tried and eventually put in prison. It intrigued me.

"Our story starts at the battle of Antioch, which was one of the biggest blood baths in human history. The disease that courses through their blood is shame, and that's where we start. I didn't want to go back and show it, because I wanted to ride this fine line between what is reality, what is this Goth movement, what are these kids getting into, and still create some historic background for it. I love the old approaches but we wanted to be something different."

As his filmography shows, Cardone, who prefers writing to directing, is firmly entrenched in lower budget films. "I'm very proud B-filmmakers," he said. "My films have not been huge breakouts, but they've all made money and I've made them the way I wanted to make them. I love B-films. I'm fascinated by that world. I think you can tell a truer and more realistic story with B-characters. Some of the greatest films made were B-films. In studio pictures you almost have to be bigger than life. In B-pictures, B-characters don't have to be bigger than life — they can be crazier than life. They just seem more real to me, and

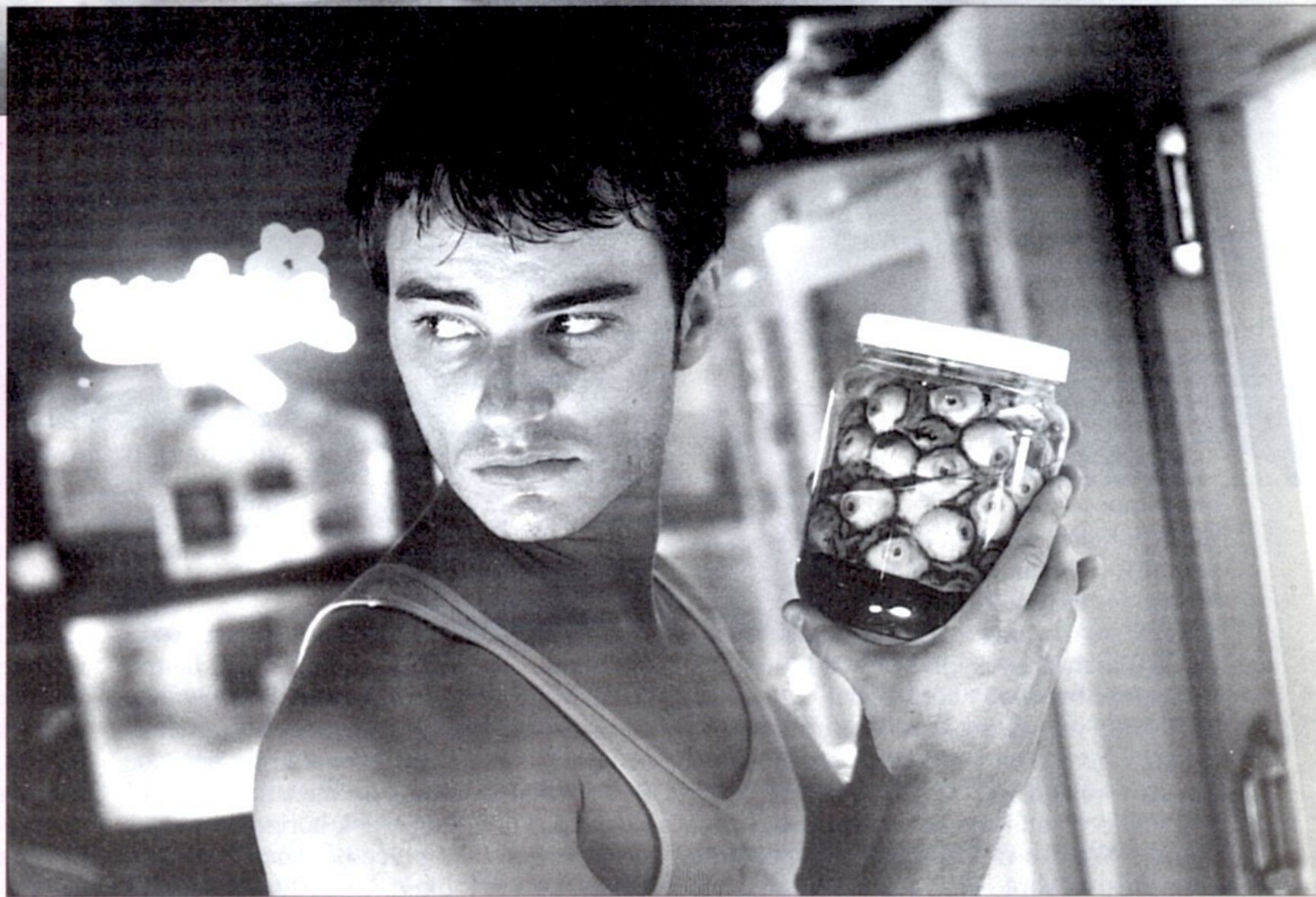


BRINGING THE WAR TO A WAFFLE HOUSE NEAR YOU: Above: Brendan Fehr, Izabella Miko, and Kerr Smith are unlikely warriors in the battle against an ancient evil in *THE FORSAKEN*. Right: Innocent traveller Sean (Kerr Smith) rapidly gets in over his head.

that's where I've stayed."

The Forsaken don't, however, have a free rein feasting on humans and spreading the ghastly infection. On their trail are the hunters, victims of the vampires who have been bitten but have not yet turned. They have discovered that by killing the creature that bit you, you can end the affliction; the infection dies. Of the original eight Forsaken, four have been hunted down: Two during the inquisition and another couple at other times. One remains in North Africa, one in Europe, and two in the United States.

Wanting to go to his sister's wedding but lacking the funds, young Sean agrees to deliver a vintage Mercedes to Florida. He sets out from California and along the way breaks the first cardinal rule: Don't pickup hitchhikers. Nick (Brendan Fehr), his new companion, turns out to be much more than a fellow traveller. Nick is a hunter on the trail of a band of vampires who use the lonely highways as their feeding grounds. Nick, having been bitten by one of the Forsaken, is now in a race against time to stave off the mysterious



"Turning."

"We've said it's not really a vampire movie," Cardone explained. "You don't drive a stake through their hearts and that kind of stuff. But while we were cutting the film, we came to realize that everyone in the movie is a vampire. Sean starts out as a young kid who's totally innocent to this whole thing. He picks up a hunter whose been bitten and they stumble across a girl whose also been bitten. The bottom line is

that they all end up vampires and try to extricate themselves. There's an interesting twist when you talk about the characters. We brought in this whole sort-of metaphorical structure of AIDS cocktails, and that's how they're really staying alive. They've discovered this concoction of drugs like an AIDS cocktail that can't cure you but can slow down the onset of the Turning.

"Some people react to it differently, like they do to AIDS cocktails. Sometimes the

Turning is faster, sometimes it's slower. Sometimes it's more violent, disease-wise. Sometimes it's not."

Disposing of the idea of fangs and contact lenses to give his creatures a demonic look, Cardone went in another direction that will probably give Joe Lieberman nightmares. "We stumbled on an idea that I think is cool with the vamps themselves," said Cardone with a smile. "We went with the approach that predators, when they get excited or when they're in a feeding frenzy, salivate. We went on the basis that they regurgitate the blood that's in them. So you'll constantly

but make it harder to deal with."

Cardone has taken the assault from the left seriously. "It is effecting the industry," he said. "Ask any filmmaker with the balls to tell you: The studios are running scared. This is the first time you're seeing Democrats reacting to it. Usually, you've had Republicans pounding the pulpit on this issue. It's censorship, plain and simple."

Shooting 85% of the film after the sun went down gave little relief from the unrelenting heat of a summer shoot in the deserts of Arizona and Colorado. "The desert at night is its own monster," said the director.

works really well. We have a young, beautiful cast, and we wanted to make sure that we weren't getting too far into the fashion model look or the WB look. But everything was so dirty and so gritty and so hot that it really combined to make this edgy, vogueish type of look. And it worked well."

The stake through the heart routine is out in *THE FORSAKEN*, but Bram Stoker's concepts die hard. "In some respects, we go back to the original concept," said Cardone. "Dracula never turned into anything — his canine fangs got bigger. There are digital effects but they relate to some deaths due to

sunlight. In our film the only way you can really kill them is to decapitate them or put them into sunlight. So there are digital effects that have to do with their deaths.

"We approached this from a realistic point of view. There is mention in the film a couple of times that these guys kill but don't want to bring attention on themselves. They could be the guys riding the rails who kill women at night. They could be two kids killing their parents in an upscale neighborhood of Beverly Hills." The hunter in fact tracks them down by spending months following newspaper articles, looking for a pattern, a link to their movements. To conceal their presence, the *Forsaken* hide their victims.

The film has adult themes and adult dialogue, but called for a cast of young actors. Cardone cast Kerr Smith, who plays Jack McPhee on TV's *DAWSON'S CREEK* was tapped to play Sean, who finds his innocence shattered when he falls into the world of the vampires. Smith also recently appeared in

FINAL DESTINATION. "He brought that innocence to the role," Cardone said. "Everybody knows him as Jack, the gay character. In this, he's much different. He's the all-American, heterosexual boy who has his own dark past. He cuts trailers in a Troma type fast-to-video film studio. He picks up a car one day, a \$50,000 restored Mercedes, from one of those drive across the United States services. Of course he can't get a scratch on it.

"This kid is an amazing talent. He's a young Montgomery Cliff. On any of these films you run the fine edge of lunacy. If you're going to do anything with a semblance of reality, you have to have somebody who has the chops. I've never seen a young hero play fear with such terror, with tears in his eyes, that extra element. He played it with a sense of reality that really fleshed out the character of Sean."



WILD DESERT SHOOT: Blistering heat, even at night, turned the *FORSAKEN* location into a torturous endurance test for director Joe Cardone (above, with Kerr Smith) and crew.

see when any of them are getting excited sexually, or when they get excited in predator mode, they regurgitate blood, even in their eyes. Anything that's moist with bodily fluids like their eyes kind-of tear blood. It's very subtle but a very cool effect."

A film where most of the characters splatter the screen with their bloody vomit doesn't sound like it will sit well with politicians clamoring for controls on Hollywood. "We are in big trouble," Cardone concedes. "People aren't made into criminals in movie theaters; they're made in family situations, school situations. I do agree in the sense that we're anesthetizing everyone to violence. I love violence in art. Violence in our art is part of our social structure, it's part of our culture, part of our species so it should be rendered in our art but I don't think we should be anesthetized to it. We should see violence but we should also see the effects of violence. We should feel violence and feel the effects of violence. I think there should be more violence

It's a great place. During the day, it was 113 degrees in some locations, like a wrecking yard. It was 130 degrees in the metal. The nights weren't much better. At 4AM it was still 98 degrees. It's why they call it Death Valley: Its a great horror character all to itself. We shot at night because that's when vampires do their deeds, and I love those big giant black horizons. This is supposed to take place between L.A. and Texas, so we looked for different locales that would fit if you were traveling there."

Of the seven week shoot, seven were nocturnal location lensings. The dirt and grime of outdoor shooting did have some beneficial cinematic results, though. "It was very difficult because it was gritty and dirty," said Cardone, "but that's what we wanted. Everyone's done pictures where you want that sweaty look, so you bring in makeup and you squirt them with glycerin but it's never really real. This was so real and so hot and so dirty and so gritty that it

Along for the ride is Canadian actor Brendan Fehr, another FINAL DESTINATION alumni who has spent two seasons on ROSWELL. Fehr plays the hunter Nick.

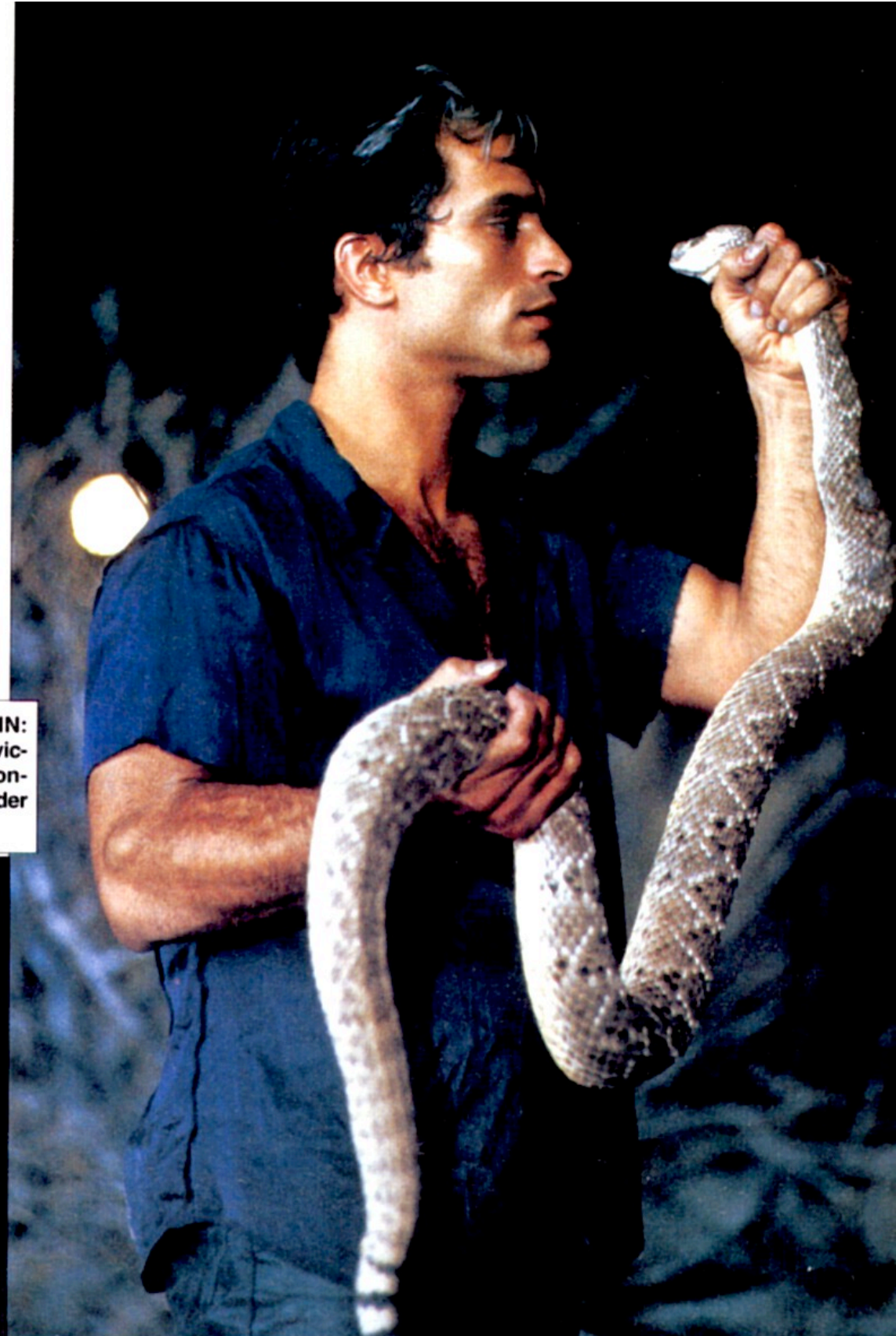
"He's different than Kerr, but equally as talented," declared Cardone. "Brendan is all over the place as an actor, but can hone what he needs. I needed a character for the hunter that is so likable that you never guess in the beginning that he's on the edge of death, barely alive, constantly facing something much worse than death. Brendan has this great sense of life about him."

Along the way, Sean and Nick pick up Megan, a young woman who has survived a vampire attack. Nick decides to use Megan, who has been infected, to attract the killers. One of the first actresses who auditioned for Cardone was Polish-born Izabella Miko, who had just finished her role as the beautiful blonde Cammie in COYOTE UG-

I really wanted it to be real. I went through a lot of different choices but I stuck with her and she does an incredible job."

The character of Teddy had originally been written for a male, but when Cardone interviewed Alexis Thorpe he initiated a gender change. Teddy is the novice vampire, newly initiated into the group. "She kind of came out

FINDING PLACE ON THE FOOD CHAIN: Megan (Izabella Miko, below) is a mute victim of the vampires, drafted into the conflict. Right: Kit (Jonathon Schaech), leader of an itinerant band of blood-predators.



LY. "I liked her because there are some very edgy scenes in it for her that have to do with nudity," said the director. "Not from a sexual standpoint, from a standpoint that she has to cool her body down constantly because of this blood infection. She runs this death like fever constantly. I needed an actress that wasn't going to be inhibited because the scenes are brutal. She regurgitates blood and she's in terror and she's a mute. She's in shock for most of the picture. I needed an actress who would have done a Polanski movie 20 years ago, like KNIFE IN THE WATER. I was looking for a European actress because by nature they're freer and have none of the inhibitions. She had this great, Mary Pickford kind of look, and because I was doing this nudity aspect with her I didn't want to exploit that nature of it.

of nowhere," he explained. "I think this is her very first film. I just thought she had this sort of edgy sexuality that was quite innocent, so I changed the role. She recently Turned. You find that people who have Turned, especially if they were real innocent, have a hard time adjusting to the killing. That's the basis of her character. She loves the kill, she has a lot of fun with it, but then she has remorse and regret over it."

Rounding out the blood splattered glamour trio is African-born, model-turned-actress Phina Oruche. The actress may be familiar to BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER fans as Olivia, Giles, old girlfriend whose skepticism is shattered by her encounter with The Gentlemen in "Hush." Having read the script, Oruche "bugged the heck" out of Cardone. Although the role of Cym,

Jonathan's girlfriend, wasn't written for a black actress, Cardone decided Oruche was too good to pass up. "Phina is incredible," gushed the director. "She is an accomplished British Shakespearan actor. I was seeing everybody. The studio wanted someone with a much bigger name, but she was such an incredible actress, and I needed somebody with this great presence who doesn't really say a whole lot during the picture. She's very sexy, but very scary. Once you've turned and you're into this, it gives you an incredible freedom. You go anywhere you want, fuck anybody you want. The killing is a big game to her."

Cardone freely admits that the vampire road is well traveled, but THE FORSAKEN is slightly different. "It's not a horror film in the true sense of the word," he said. "It's more of an action thriller and because it's a road picture there are a lot of car stunts and chases. The end is one big set piece. It takes place in this big roadside attraction called The Thing. It harkens back to more realistic elements. We really did try and take this legend and bring it down to a real rough and tumble gritty road picture." □

Faust†

The deals that damn weren't all confined to the screen.

By Alan Jones

Premiered at the Sitges Fantasy Festival 2000, well in advance of its inaugural Spanish release and other Continental dates, Brian Yuzna's FAUST was rated a major disappointment by expectant audiences and film critics alike. Financed by Julio Fernandez, Yuzna, owner of Filmax (Spain's Miramax), FAUST is the first of five productions from the Fantastic Factory horror label masterminded by Yuzna from his new base of operations in Barcelona. In truth, the \$6 million movie based on the erotic comic strip by Tim Vigil and David Quinn, wasn't really ready to be shown. Some of the special effects hadn't been completed, the editing was rough, the digital finessing had yet to be added, and it was a video transfer that unspooled on screen at the Auditori, the largest cinema in the Sitges area. Yuzna had begged Fernandez not to show the film in this uncompleted state, but for many political reasons the screening went ahead anyway.

The day after the premiere, (October 12, 2000), the newspaper reviews came out and were virtually all devastating and negative. "It was a miserable thing to have to do," lamented Yuzna the day after the screening. "FAUST isn't a movie anymore, it's a whole political and financial scheme to inaugurate a studio, the first of a production line."

For those not up to speed on the

whole Fantastic Factory concept, REANIMATOR producer Brian Yuzna relocated from Los Angeles to Spain two years ago in order to set up a Hammer-upon-Barcelona type of studio. The idea is to produce one genre release every three months, create their own in-house stars and personnel, and provide distributor Fernandez with the exploitable horror titles the international market is crying out for. Next in line are Jack Sholder's ARACHNID (currently in post-production), Stuart Gordons DAGON (shooting now), Jaime (THE NAMELESS) Balaguero's DARKNESS and Yuzna's second sequel to his most popular hit, BEYOND REANIMATOR.

Yuzna continued, "Until I moved to Barcelona, I'd bounced around different companies, making stuff like THE DENTIST, PROGENY and CRYING FREEMAN. The Fantastic Factory is on a whole new, different level. There aren't enough visionary people out there who can navigate the minefield of subsidies, government of-

fices and the European film industry, or get a major city behind them to develop a new studio. But Julio Fernandez is driven enough to say, 'Lets do it.' I can't praise Julio enough for all the enthusiasm and support he has provided me with for this risky venture. Yet last night felt very much like the emperor has no clothes. I begged him not to show FAUST in such an incomplete form, but too much was riding on it for that to realistically happen."

A futuristic update of the Faust legend, Yuzna's action-horror feature finds John Jaspers (Mark Frost) making a pact with the Devil in order to get revenge on the satanic cult responsible for murdering his girlfriend. But the power-crazed Mephistopheles (Andrew Divoff) turns him into a caped killer armed with long metal claws—one who will eventually play an important role in an upcoming prophesied black magic ritual. Only Doctor Jade de Camp (Isabel Brook) can see the real man behind the monster Jaspers has become, and tries to

unlock the deep torment fuelling his murderous rages. Meanwhile, Captain Margolies (Jeffrey Combs) investigates Jaspers' past and inexorably gets lured into the demonic twilight world that will cause Armageddon unless Jaspers separates his ominous hallucinations from the harsh reality of his fractured existence.

After an exhaustive search,

A HELL OF A START: Mark Frost (below) as John Jaspers, selling his soul for the sake of revenge. Right: Monica Van Campen as FAUST's Claire.





Faust

Mark Frost

Walking in Christopher Lee's footsteps.

By Alan Jones

The actor director Brian Yuzna chose to play the title role of FAUST in the first of the Fantastic Factory titles was Mark Frost. No, not the producer Mark Frost who allied himself to cult director David Lynch, co-created TWIN PEAKS and directed STORYVILLE. It's the other one, the one British television audiences can currently see on the BBC's daytime soap opera DOCTORS. Frost, who also had roles in BLUE JUICE, MACHINE and JOLLY BOYS LAST STAND, said, "For a while American Internet groupies who logged on to the FAUST websites were really getting confused. But its just little old me. And Mark Frost, although it sounds too perfect, is my real name."

Born in Birmingham, in the English Midlands, where he studied acting at the Birmingham School of Speech and Drama, Frost describes himself as just an ordinary working actor who usually plays thugs and villains in staple TV soap fare. "I'm not one of those serious actors into Shakespeare and all that. I've always looked at the profession from the cowboys and Indians aspect. All the things I loved to do as a child I now get paid for—from playing baddies and fighting, to wearing great costumes and battling evil. DOCTORS is the first series in which I've played a respected member of the community, although I know I was cast to be a poor mans George Clooney for the housewives."

Frost had never read the erotic horror comic strip created by Tim Vigil and David Quinn. "I only knew the original Goethe story. Some of my friends were familiar with the comic and were impressed I was doing it when I told them. They did make remarks about how dark and erotic it was, but I didn't realize how much until I read it during the shoot! My one major worry was I knew nothing about the business of horror. I didn't know going in what was expected of me, and it took me ages to understand that it was being made for a niche horror audience and that most of the acting rules I live by didn't apply. Happily, Andrew Di-

voff and Jeffrey Combs took me under their wings and I received enormous inspiration from them. They're both big names in horror and had the experience of working in the genre before—and with Brian—so their guidance was a lifesaver."

For his transformation into Faust, Frost initially spent six hours in the make-up chair under Screaming Mad George's su-



HOW THE FANTASTIC FACTORY BLEW THAT HAPPY MEAL TIE-IN: Patented Yuzna outlandishness and short shooting schedules combine to turn the newborn studio into what may be a Hammer for the new millenium.

pervision. "We got it down to four hours in the end and it was another whole new adventure for me. It wasn't a chore to sit still all that time. What was hard was listening to George's thrash metal CDs! Once we came to an agreement that he'd play a CD and then I'd play a more relaxing one, the atmosphere improved. I only had to put the make-up on for the final two weeks of the shoot because the suit still hadn't arrived and we shot everything else up front. It was difficult in those four weeks actually having a vision of what [FAUST protagonist] John Jaspers would eventually become and how the transformation would evolve. Again, Andrew Divoff, settled my reservations and told me what a buzz he got the first time he put on his WISHMASTER outfit."

However, one part of his costume did cause early problems. "The large finger blades were never properly fitted due to the last minute rush again, and they were diffi-

cult to maneuver at the start. I'd forget I had them on and would tap people on the shoulder and give them a real fright. It was a strange thing, but as soon as I put the suit on, no one would stop for a chat, look me in the eye or speak to me over lunch. I started becoming this monster because everyone was ignoring me. The stunt work was hard and physically demanding, but luckily Andrew Divoff had met this Brazilian kung-fu master on the street and he became my stunt double. The amount of gore we used really surprised me too. I couldn't get the stuff out of my hair or fingernails for ages, even though I'd shower constantly after the sixteen-hour days of mayhem."

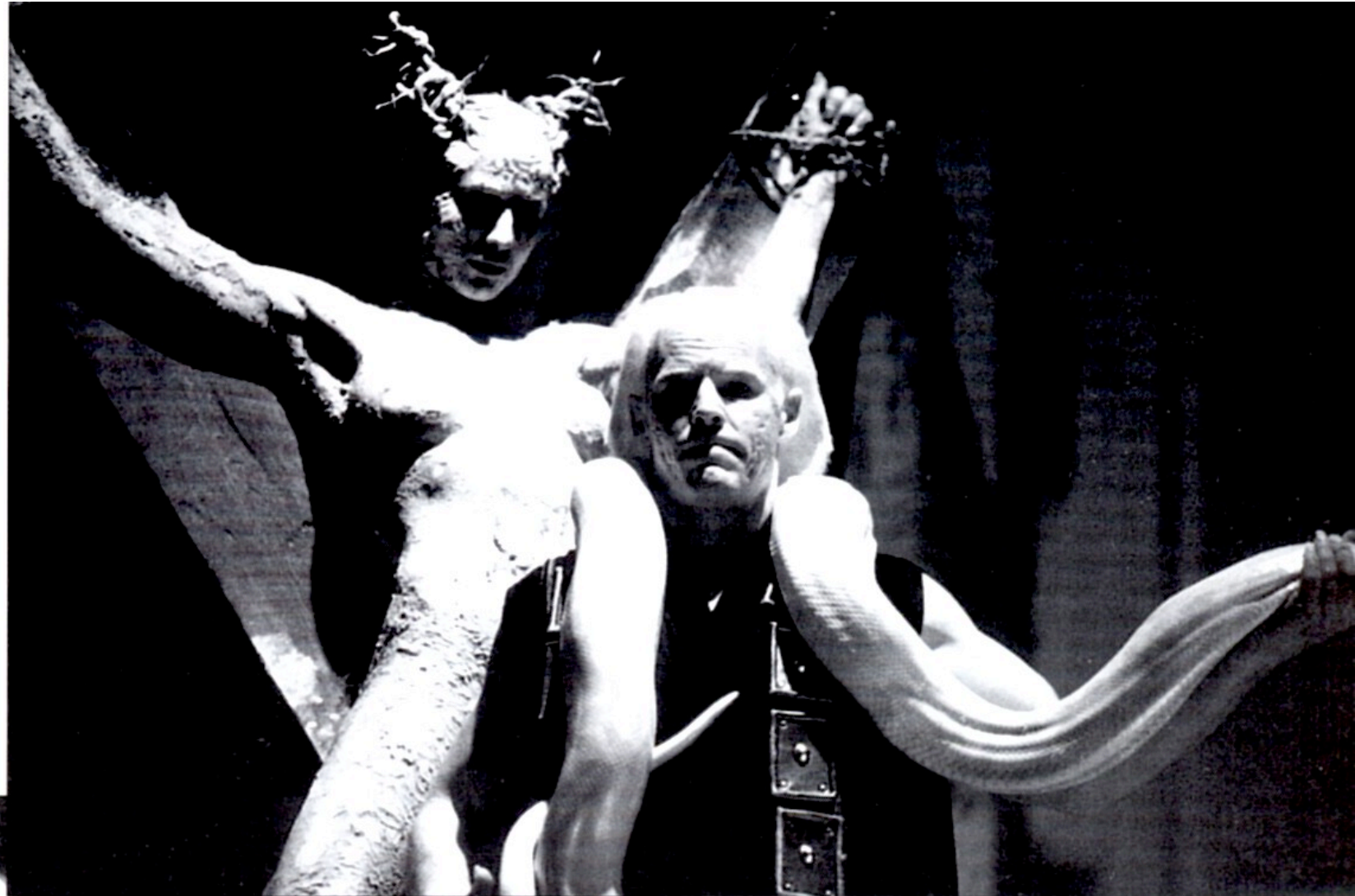
When he wasn't in the Faust suit, Frost spent most of the time naked in front of the cameras. "My genitals were continually being gaffer taped up. I was horrified at first, but after a while I didn't care. It was another step into the unknown on this weird and wild adventure. The only criticism I would level at Brian's direction was that he had this very clear vision of what he wanted FAUST to be, and he would have difficulty in translating that to me

because I was such a genre virgin. I knew he wanted me for my two best assets: my mad eyes and square jaw, for impact behind a mask. For the first week I thought what he was asking me to do was hammy and stagy, but his energy and drive soon made me trust him implicitly."

Although Frost isn't yet signed for a FAUST sequel—that depends on the films box-office future—he does expect to be working for the Fantastic Factory again. "Julio and Brian have intimated they want to build their own roster of stars, and that I'm being considered for other parts. Its great being in on a new enterprise and starting everything from scratch. This is what the early days of Hammer must have felt like and, although I was working blind to a certain degree and I'm a terrible critic of my own work, becoming a cult figure to horror aficionados is rather an appealing thought." □

the FAUST lead eventually went to the unknown British actor Mark Frost, who appeared in the surfing melodrama BLUE JUICE and currently appears on British daytime television in the soap opera DOCTORS. Yuzna remarked, "I needed someone I could take a chance on and transform into a Fantastic Factory regular, like Hammer did with Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. I wanted someone crazy, sympathetic, and athletic enough to rise to the John Jaspers occasion. Frankly, I was at a complete loss until my 12 year-old son watched Mark's show-reel and jumped up and down at his charisma."

He continued, "The script was a



Above: Andrew Divoff as M, the devil's emissary on Earth. Left: Director Brian Yuzna.

problem for two main reasons: The original comic strip was highly erotic and extreme, but we couldn't commercially make a near-porno action adventure. It also encompassed three genres in one. The John Jaspers story is a horror movie pure and simple. The Devil is fighting God for his soul and if he isn't beaten the whole world will die. Horror, from FRANKENSTEIN to SCREAM, has a rigid formality to it that's quite hard to achieve and make believable. Jade's story is the thriller element, because evil to her is a sickness and she tries to cure the monster in the man — cliché from PSYCHO onwards. Her mysterious nightmares, about a Smooth Man abusing her fits the thriller context too. Evil to Captain Margolies is bad guys doing bad things because they want money, sex, and power. When he's put in jail and busts out, FAUST becomes an action adventure. Juggling those three strands together was hard, but

necessary, because I didn't want to make a traditional horror movie. That's also the reason why heavy metal music accompanies many of the horrific scenes.

"All these problems were identified first by Stuart Gordon when he was writing the script to direct years ago. Nothing much of Stuart's original script remains, which is why he doesn't get a credit on the finished film. Nor did I want to piss off the original comic strip writers, the reason why I pulled in David Quinn for the final polish. What none of the script versions had was Faust transforming, as I couldn't handle the idea of a suit and I've always felt capes were silly. Superheroes that work well on screen don't have a cape, like THE CROW or BLADE. I mean, how do you get to any point in a story where the superhero dons a cape? It doesn't make any sense to me. The whole

cape thing drove me crazy for months until someone in the costume department said, Just give him a red silk one and be done with it!

FAUST actually plays like a Greatest Hits package from Yuzna's past: the sado-masochistic punk imagery from RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD 3, the SOCIETY over-load of prosthetic effects, the cynical shocks from BRIDE OF REANIMATOR, and, of course, Jeffrey Combs, the Yuzna brigade's mascot of menace. He said, "I think I did that just to make the film as entertaining as possible. I don't care what movie it is I always get bored at some point. There's always this midway let-down and I wanted to get over that by suddenly shifting in tone from comedy to gore, from sex to burlesque, from silly

monsters to rock video stylishness. I also did as much fast editing as possible to disguise the action that clearly didn't work.

FAUST is not only an investment risk, its also an artistic one too.

So has the shine gone off the whole Fantastic Factory enterprise for Yuzna? "Its peculiar, because the problems I've had I never thought would become ones and vice-versa. I've spent the last year making mistakes that the whole world saw last night blown up to 35mm. Every day has contained a surprise and baffling logistics like sets not being built on time for me to shoot on. I guess that's just what happens when you start a whole new studio from scratch. I'm glad I'm just producing the next three films, to be honest. Directing and producing FAUST was a mistake in retrospect. But I'll make many more in the near future, that's for certain. Hopefully by the time we get to BEYOND REANIMATOR we'll be okay and the Fantastic Factory will be a force to be reckoned with." □

Python

*It's not about pythons.
Yes, we're confused, too.*

By Dan Scapperotti

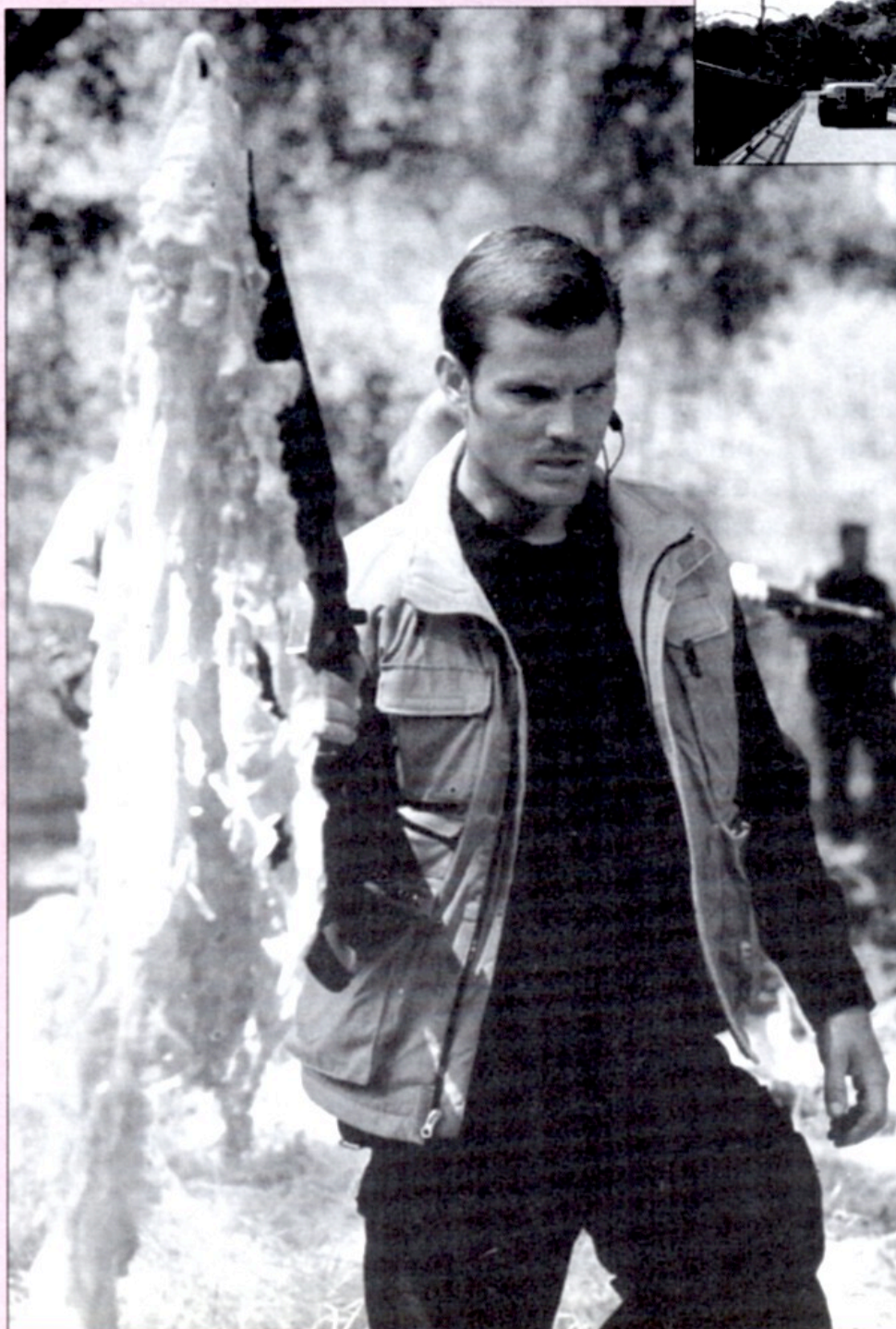
Snakes, even on the best of days, are uninviting. No wonder filmmakers have used the reptiles as the focus of menace for years. From *CULT OF THE COBRA* to *Sssssss*, the slithering critters have caused goose bumps to run up spines. Even *CONAN THE BARBARIAN* had his run in with a reptilian deity. Fox Home Entertainment has just unleashed the latest sidewinder on an unsuspecting movie public in *PYTHON*. By the way, the title doesn't refer to the snake.

Cinematographer Richard Clabaugh turned director for this film. No stranger to the genre, Clabaugh lensed several horror epics, particularly those with numbers after them, such as *CHILDREN OF THE CORN 4* and *6*, *WAXWORKS 1* and *2*, *PROPHECY II* and *PHANTOMS*. As a teenager Clabaugh fashioned his photographic skills with both still and Super 8 cameras. At 16, he entered a short film in a Florida film festival run by a local PBS station. The science fiction parody won, and Clabaugh saw the future. His first feature as Director of Photography was the 1995 film *PROPHECY*.

Clabaugh was DP on *ESCAPE UNDER PRESSURE* and *DEEP CORE 2000* for the Unified Film Organization. When UFO green lighted *PYTHON*, Clabaugh got his hands on the reins. "*PYTHON* is perfect for me," he said. "I love things with a certain amount of humor in them. The original script for *PYTHON* was by Chris Neal and Dan Knoff. The script had a lot of humor in it and a lot of peo-

ple were worried that the humor was going to be taken out by the time it went through the rewrite wringer, but I was adamant that we had to keep it there. My template was *TREMORS*, because that film showed that you could have really good, funny stuff going on with the characters, and have really scary stuff going on at every other moment. That was what we really wanted to do; it was a hard mix to make. Fortunately, what we had going for us was a cast that was really wonderful."

WHO'S TOUGHER?: Casper van Dien comes up against a surprisingly agile snake (right) in *PYTHON*.



That cast includes Wil Wheaton, Frayne Rosanoff, Casper Van Dien and Robert Englund.

The film opens as a huge 60 foot snake that has been discovered in a Southeast Asian jungle is being flown back to the States. It breaks loose, kills the crew and escapes from the wrecked plane. People in a small American town soon turn up missing or dead, their bodies partially dissolved by an unknown acid. Suspicion falls on Brian and John Cooper (Frayne Rosanoff and Chris Owens), two brothers who run the Perfecto Plating Company. Englund plays Dr. Anton Rudolph, the snake

loving scientist who discovered the giant reptile.

"Robert came in and read the script," said Clabaugh, "and really plugged into the character. The doctor for us was supposed to be like the Alec Guinness character in *THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI* — he's just really into this project, a very dedicated man. Rudolph is not a bad man, but he gets focused on what he's doing. Its only when this final event happens that he see that he'd lost sight of the human nature of what was going on. When everyone around him gets killed, that's sort of his catharsis, his epiphany. Robert plugged into that and did wonderful things with that character. He had the hard-sell stuff, the expository stuff that was really hard to pull off, but he had the skill to do it, as well as bringing a great sense of character to it."

The characters represent the

whole spectrum of human traits from buffoon to serious. Wil Wheaton plays Cooper's punk friend, Tommy. Jenny McCarthy appears as a sexpot looking for a new home, and Scott Williamson as a sarcastic, self-promoting real estate agent, Kenny the Closer, who shows McCarthy a neat little item that just came on the market. Another reason to stick with Century 2000.

"The characters are from different realities," Clabaugh explained. "Some of these characters are very over-the-top. The deputy character is really broadly comic in one direction and, on the other hand, Billy Zabta was the extreme dramatic character.

The entire cast was a wonderful, dedicated bunch of people. They grabbed their parts and tried to do good things with them. These people are really interesting and engaging to watch on screen. It was funny because Billy would come up and say 'Come on I want to do some of the funny stuff.' I told him 'No, no you're our serious dramatic anchor; you have to be serious all the time.' The other deputy, he has to be silly all of the time, and our other lead characters fall in the middle. The trick is to get them all in one room. They all have their sort-of different reality and to get them all to mesh into the same universe was the tricky part."

One of the sequences that the director regrets losing to the cutting room floor is the explanation of the title. Obviously audiences will assume Python refers to the snake. Not so: "When the group wander in, they find Rudolph down in the tunnels spouting Dante," Clabaugh explained. "He quotes Dante and mentions Python. What's missing is a guy saying 'I saw that thing, and it's no python.' Python was this serpent deity that would guard the Oracles and keep mankind from learning the gods' secrets. It was this giant serpentine creature, and that's why Rudolph is calling this python, because he is referring to that Greek deity.

"In the original draft of the script he created it, but we thought it would be much more interesting if Rudolph had discovered it and had been asked to study it. He himself is just very excited about it and didn't know what it could do. So there was a little more danger to it, because he himself didn't know everything about it and couldn't control it. He had a sort of a kinship with it."



FIRST IMPRESSIONS: Robert Englund meets his neighbor, a scene cut from the final release.

Another scene that was cut from the film was a wonderful character moment

which showcased just how close Englund's character was to the snakes. The military team led by Casper Van Dien that has been sent in to capture the writhing monster has been all but wiped out when the snake comes face to fang with the scientist. Suddenly, the snake lowers its head towards Rudolph's pocket. "Rudolph has this little snake that he carries around with him," said Clabaugh. "We had our big snake head which the folks at Sodo Effects built for us, which I really liked. The little snake comes out of his pocket and the big snake and the little snake were nose to nose with each other for a little bit. We shot this and it was really cool: The little snake actually reacted to this large snake head. Then the python kind-of raised its head and went off and let him live. He reached in his pocket and took out the little snake and kissed it. It was this great character moment; you know why the snake let him live, because it sort of saw him as one of them; it had a kinship with him. For reasons of timing, that got cut out."

Circumstances conspired to prevent Clabaugh from being in on most of the editing process. Once the editor was finished with the first cut, the director was scheduled to sit in on the final cut. Unfortunately, UFO was in post production on several other films and editing was delayed a couple of weeks. Clabaugh finally started the process but he had taken a job as an instructor at the North Carolina School of the Arts and had to bow out of the process prematurely. "I cut as much as I could," he said, "but I wasn't there during most of the editing. As with any movie

and especially one that had any kind of comedy stuff in it for a company that generally does dramatic stuff, you kind of have to be there and see it through. It really wasn't anybody's fault."

Budgetary restrictions precluded a full scale attack by the snake on the town. Instead, the monster is confined to the surrounding forest and the underground tunnels. "Chris had written a wonderful script," said Clabaugh, "but no one had given her any guidelines about what our limitations were. There were things in there that simply were not in our production resources. The snake actually charges into the center of town during a carnival and is eating people out on the street and the kids in the big bounce house. Some great stuff, but we couldn't shoot it on our budget. What I thought was most practical from a production standpoint, and what I thought would be better was if we could get our lead characters in a confined area with the snake. So we got this whole idea of going into the tunnels, luring the snake down there. Then we could have the chase and we could have the snake where we could get it out of the sunlight, where we could be a little more moody with it and stay more within our production resources and not shoot an entire huge town sequence."

UFO's in-house effects supervisor, Ed Hoffman, was in charge of the CGI effects. The lead animator was Kevin Little. Surprisingly, the director never met Little until the two were doing commentary for the DVD release of the film. While the giant snake is effective, there are a couple of scenes that could have used some color correction. "Unfortunately they had a really tight delivery date on the production,"

Clabaugh said. "Even the animators will tell you they could have done a better job on some shots, but some of them are great. The scene in the garage where we first see the snake I think is wonderful. I think that when that snake works, it works wonderfully. We have our loose ends but that happens on a film with this budget. The main thing that I really wanted to focus on was the character stuff. I wanted it to go from comedy to drama fairly

smoothly and quickly. The scene with Kenny the Closer and Jenny is very humorous. They're toying with each other over the sale of the house. Then Kenny goes out to the garage and suddenly we're in a moody scary moment. I think we could have transitioned it a tad better editorially but I thought that everything hinged on the people and the characters and whether or not they worked."

WE BOUGHT THIS SNAKE HEAD AND, DAMMIT, WE'RE GOING TO USE IT!: The cast of PYTHON learns why it's not healthy to argue with a really big prop.



The finale finds the snake chasing the survivors into a metal plating plant. Cooper is trapped behind one of the huge acid vats

that fill the plant. With the snake snapping at him, Cooper wards off the attack with a metal bar. Suddenly, the girl drops a metal weight on the creature. The finished scene makes it look as if the snake could easily gobble up Cooper, but that's not how it was written. "That scene was structured differently," admitted the director. "There is a suspenseful beat. He stands on the edge of the vat. The snake slowly moves across that vat of acid, and then lunges. He falls, and that's when she drops the heavy weight on it. The snake is almost fully extended and, boom, its pulled up short like you grabbed it. It can't reach him because it's pinned down by that weight. Then with each lunge it's getting a little closer, until it's a half inch away from being able to eat him. That's when she hits the button and drops the second weight down on the snake.

Now, after animation, it's got the snake rising above him and is coiling down at him. The way it was story-boarded out and the way it was blocked when we shot it was that the snake was stretched fully out and when the weight got dropped it was just shy of being able to reach him. I think that would have worked but I can't fault those guys. They had the most incredible deadline to get this thing out. It was quite amazing."

The tight, 18-day shooting schedule and the large number of set ups and locations each day became the director's biggest problem, requiring careful planning. But there was little room to maneuver if something went wrong or there were unforeseen delays. The fiery climax that was planned had to be abandoned when a piece of temperamental equipment broke down. "If you look at it, we are all over the place," he said. "We are inside, outside, we're in a small town, we're in a park, various interior settings. We had days where we would literally go to three locations in the course of a day. You lose time with company moves and, organizationally, we kept running into difficulties in that regard because there was so much to coordinate. If one element didn't show up at the right time, everything kind of dominoed on itself. That happened a couple of times. Accidents happen. The hardest part was staying on time and getting all the right pieces at the right time so we could just keep moving. The ending of the film is not in the movie."

After the snake is killed, Chris Owen runs over to check that the monster is dead. He lifts up the snake head. It's dead. Suddenly the snake's body thrashes around, smashing all the pipes in the building. The

place is about to blow up. "They all run out of the building and, kaboom, the place blows up behind them," Clabaugh explains. "They're all across the street looking at it, and it's the big moment in the movie. 'Yay, we killed the snake, it's done!' But, 'Oh darn. We lost Perfecto Plating the building we wanted to save all this time.' We had 15 minutes to shoot that ending, and for 15 minutes it just happened that the smoke machine wouldn't power up, wouldn't warm up. So we didn't have anymore time to wait. Of course, as soon as we wrapped it was fine, but we had to be onto another scene. So we didn't have this in-



teractivity that would make it look like they were actually looking at an exploding building, rather than look like they're just standing there. It's one of those little technical things that makes the difference between selling a moment and not selling a moment. In editorial they said it doesn't look like they're at an exploding building and they yanked that. We went instead to the tag-out ending, which is not as strong."

Clabaugh had met actor Wil Wheaton on the DEEP CORE 2000 project. Trying to maintain a professional air, the DP didn't tell anyone that he was a big science fiction fan. In fact Clabaugh had appeared in TREKKIES, the 1997 ode to fandom. As it happened, during shooting Wheaton saw the picture. The next day he walked up to Clabaugh and said "You're so busted." When PYTHON came along, the director tapped Wheaton for the offbeat role of Tommy. "Wil has always had to be the straight character, the smart kid who saves the day and has everything figured out," said Clabaugh. "He's such a cool, colorful character, and like any actor he's a lot more versatile than he ever gets to play. I was talking to him about doing this sort of punked-out character. He wanted to go with it one-hundred percent. Dye his hair purple? Great, love it. Let's give him a pierced nipple.

"There was one scene where he was lying on the couch and I said 'What if there was drool coming out of the side of your mouth?' Most actors wouldn't do that but Wil was cool. It's a character moment and he did it. Sara Monell, who plays his girl-

friend, Theresa, was there doing her lines off camera, watching the monitor. When the spit came out of his mouth, she said, 'Oh God,' and covered her eyes and did all her lines without looking at the monitor. It just grossed her out."

Monell also wasn't too happy around snakes. In fact she was truly terrified of the critters. For one scene, Clabaugh decided to hand off Rudolph's pet snake to Theresa, Monell's character. The actress was underwhelmed. "She didn't want to practice with it," the director said. "She didn't want to get comfortable with it. Finally we did the take and what you see is her true reaction. Robert Englund was just the opposite. We wanted to start off on him so we have this extreme close up of the snake and then you see him lean in and kiss it. That was his idea, he wanted to show that he really loves snakes and it was just visually a way to say it right off the bat. Loves snakes more than most people love snakes."

Despite some of the technical flaws, Clabaugh is proud of the film. The main credit, according to the director, goes to the actors. "Our saving grace on this movie was the cast," he said.



THIS WAS NO BOATING ACCIDENT: Leaving Freddie behind, Robert Englund contends with carnage and antsy explorers on location.

"From the initial script read-through, everyone was really into it. Everyone had a character they felt they could sink their teeth into, everyone just went with it. We tried to cast people who were colorful, who were unique, were distinct physical types, and made strong impressions when you saw them on screen. We encouraged everyone to have fun with their characters, to take it and really play with it in a good way. Not just hit your mark and deliver your line, but to do what you do best when you're a good actor. I couldn't ask for a better cast on my first film."

Next up is a trip to Bulgaria for Clabaugh, who will act as director of photography on DARK DESCENT, a science fiction film starring ex-Superman, Dean Cain. The actor plays a marshal stranded in a mining outpost of Mars waiting for some ex-cons that he sent to prison to arrive back in town in an outer space version of HIGH NOON. □



Gary & Mike

The creators of MAD TV and THE PJ'S invent Garage Animation.

By Dan Scapperotti

Not since Route 66 has there been a TV road trip like this. In fact, I doubt if Martin Milner or George Maharis ever considered visiting a Las Vegas hooker, or having to eat a little girl's pet rabbit. But there are few taboos left standing when Fax Bahr and Adam Small, the two wild and crazy guys who created MAD TV, unleashed their new UPN show, GARY AND MIKE. In the pilot episode, "The Dawn of a New Millennium," Gary Newton, a bespectacled nerd, sets off on a family tradition: following the Lewis and Clark Trail in an RUV. Everything goes well for the first couple of blocks, and then Gary gets an unexpected traveling companion: Mike Bonner. The new arrival is just a couple of steps in front of an enraged father who has discovered Mike has slept with his daughter, who was about to be married to someone else. One disaster follows another when Mike persuades Gary to swerve from the original trail and instead tour America.

Having a show that centered on a new city each week proved to be a budget buster. But Executive producers Bahr and Small, no strangers to stop motion effects since they had used the technique on MAD TV, discovered the solution: "Fax and I created MAD TV," said Small, "and on that show we worked with a claymator named Corky Quackenbush. We did little, three-minute segments with claymation. We did a Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer parody where we ended up cutting Santa's

head off and putting it on top of the Christmas tree. We did a DAVY AND GOLIATH parody, DAVY AND THE SON OF GOLIATH, with Davy Berkowitz whose dog keeps telling him to kill. We thought doing

it in claymation was a way we could do all these big location stunts without having to leave the studio."

When Quackenbush's facilities proved too small for a full compliment of twenty-two half hour shows, the producers turned to veteran animator and acknowledged master of claymation, Will Vinton. The original six episodes of the show were produced for the Fox Network, but when they failed to air them, UPN snapped up the comedy series. "I can't believe they didn't air them," said Vinton. "One thing about new shows is that the first few episodes are challenging. The characters aren't resolved and the style isn't resolved completely. It takes a few episodes before you really know who these characters are and where the comedy is coming from. It's been a wonderful thing from a creative point of view because it gave us a chance to go back and really hone some of the early shows. In fact we ended up doing a lot of new animation for the pilot episode. They look great. They're really going to be funny."

With the urban odyssey on the move, Bahr and Small had to determine the destination of their heroes. "We picked cities we thought would be fun backgrounds for what these guys were going to go through," said Bahr. "Vegas was an obvious one. Hollywood, of course, because we know it so well. There they meet an aging star who tries to seduce them and eventually keeps them captive in her house. We were really looking for places that would have an in-

GOOFUS AND GALLANT HIT THE ROAD: Wastrel Mike is blessed with the super-human ability of getting straight-laced Gary in trouble, whether in the hospital (below), or on the Hollywood Strip (right).





teresting underbelly. These guys don't have money or connections, so they're going to be working their way through the dregs of society. It depended on the city. For instance, in Washington, DC we thought, *Let's take advantage of the political arena*, so we devised a story where they start working for a senator. They essentially destroy the guy's campaign to restore health care in the country. They get involved with a suicide cult in Minnesota. In the Las Ve-

gas episode, "The Virgin Gary," Mike buys Gary a hooker to try and deflower him, but Gary doesn't know she's a hooker and falls in love with her."

When the pair hit New York, Bahr and Small decided to expose them to the best and worst the Big Apple has to offer. Guess who got the wrong end of the deal? "They come to New York and they split up, because Mike insists that Gary is the one who's bringing them all the bad luck

on the trip," said Bahr, "but Gary insists that Mike is the one whose a 'crap magnet.' They get on subways, Mike going uptown, Gary going downtown. Instantly, Gary is forced off the subway train, falls through a hole and ends up with the mole people underneath the city. Mike goes to a pizzeria, wins free pizza for life and then gets a backstage pass for the Victoria's Secret runway show. He winds up sleeping with five supermodels. But they get back together at the end."

Beside the titular characters, the show will offer celebrities and some recurring characters. In one episode, the guys get on the "Road Rules" show and their last challenge is to wrestle WWF woman champion Chyna. In "Springered," the two find themselves on THE JERRY SPRINGER SHOW.

"There are some characters that won't be coming back every week," Bahr explained, "but will be visiting every third or fourth episode. When we're introduced to Mike in the pilot he's in bed with a girl and wakes up the next morning with the mother standing at the foot, screaming 'Oh my God. How could you sleep with this guy on your wedding day?.' The mother calls down to the father who's in the basement. He comes running up with a baseball bat and Mike jumps out the window and runs across the yard. Mike jumps in Gary's car and escapes. This father is livid. He rushes back in the house where his daughter says she's not going to marry the guy she was going to marry because she's really into Mike now. So the father vows revenge. You cut to the garage and you see that he's a member of the Missouri Highway Patrol. He goes awol in search of Mike because he wants to gun him down to avenge his daughter's dignity. His name is Officer Dick Nardell, and every third or fourth episode Dick will find the guys and give chase. There's also a guy named Kurt who's their high school friend who will also pop up now and again."

Vinton was presented with the original character concepts, but he had some reservations. "We were willing to take it on, but we wanted to rethink the design and look of the characters," said Vinton. "So we began a character design phase with them. We went through a whole process of trying more abstract characters, doing different tests at various levels of realism and it ended up with a fairly realistic play. We all felt it wanted to be a show that used semi real locations: Mount Rushmore; Las Vegas; the skyline of Manhattan; the monuments of Washington DC. We wanted it to have realistic elements, so there are roughly human proportions to the characters, relatively realistic styling in clothing, and that sort of thing. It was an unbelievable challenge from a production point of view. Every episode had thirty new sets or locations, and almost that many new characters. The notion of building all those sets and dis-

THE BILL HOLDEN ESTATE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU GUYS, now: Mike and Gary under the thrall of an aging movie star during their Hollywood adventure (below). Right: Creators Adam Small and Fax Bahr in their natural element.



parate characters every single episode was just an impossibility, so we had to come up with some pretty clever ways to deal with that. On the character side, one of the solutions was to create sort of generic puppet bodies — you know: fat man; old woman; beautiful woman; etcetera — that all had expensive and sophisticated armatures inside and foam latex.” New makeup, hair, and clothes quickly changed one character to another.

While one “extra” puppet could be used for several characters, that wasn’t the case for our stars, Gary and Mike. “We have lots of those puppets because they’re being used all the time, in every episode, and in almost every set,” said Vinton.

Locations also demanded an innovative approach. Obviously, the animation format dictated a surreal approach to backgrounds. With time and budgets working against them, Vinton used combined technologies for his locales. “We knew we couldn’t possibly build the many sets necessary to do this show,” he said. “We wanted to do stop motion because we wanted a feel of it almost like the episodes themselves, almost a gonzo adventure by a couple of 21 year olds, as if a couple of 21 year olds were not only on this trip but were also designing and doing the animation in their garage. That was the stylistic vision for a lot of the choices that followed. One of the elements we ended up using in terms of sets was a kind-of collage style using photographic images in the computer, in some cases printing those elements out and pasting them on walls for the background, in some cases just matting the characters into those. In effect, the sets are hugely composited through CG, and borrowed from everything. It has a look distinctive from *THE P.J.’S*, for example.”

The show is being created in Vinton’s Portland studio with four episodes in production at one time. Each has a director assigned to it and from four to six animators. “The effects are mostly stop motion,” Vinton explained, “but we use the computer for all kinds of things. You get a crowd scene and it ends up being computer animation. We have some of the models both in stop-motion and CGI. For example some of the cars and some of the props exist both in stop motion and CG. It’s seamless, you can’t tell. It works very well.”

As television standards crumble with changing audience tastes, Bahr and Small have worked to give *GARY AND MIKE* an edgy feel. “I don’t think you’d find it as acceptable to go quite as far to the edge as Fax and Adam have wanted to in live action,” Vinton admitted. “You have Mike in bed with his pimple faced girlfriend in the first episode when her mother walks in on him complete with little bare puppet butts. There’s a lot of stuff in this show that is



very edgy, twenty-one year-old, out-on-the-road kind of stuff that I think would be unacceptable in terms of doing it live-action. So I think we can make it a bit more funny, as well as edgy in a way that wouldn’t be that acceptable.”

The character’s facial expressions are devised much the same way as traditional animation. The animators use mirrors and their own facial features to fashion the expressions for the claymation figures. But, unlike the use of standard cel drawing to visualize mouth movement, Vinton depends on a technique developed by George Pal for his *Puppetoons*. “The mouths in this case are all replacement mouths,” said Vinton. “We have some predetermined set of mouths that the characters are using all the time. We have different sets of them depending on whether they’re basically generically happy or sad or whatever. Beyond that, the animators will use their own mouth shapes. It’s like any animation: The animator draws the character from his own sense of performance.”

The producers decided early on that *GARY AND MIKE* would have a rough look in terms of style. Vinton wanted to avoid too smooth a look for the characters. “You have to look at the tone of the material for inspiration,” said the Claymator. “What cutting-edge techniques, what attitudes, what styles, what new kinds of animation you might be creating. The challenge here is not to do super sharp, clear sort-of animation, which we have done a lot of in the past for entertainment and for commercials. We wanted to give this show a feel of rawness, a crudeness that’s like garage animation, like it came out of somebody’s garage where a couple of guys were working. The challenge

there is how do you make it a little bit rougher.

“One of the things that’s been a breakthrough on this particular show is that we decided to shoot it all digitally. It’s the first show we’re doing where there’s no film whatsoever. The cameras are tiny little cameras that are plugged directly into the computers that are taking in and storing the images as they are being created, putting them into the show. It’s an unbelievable thing. You get quality feedback of every shot as you go, and you’re able to go back and reposition or re-shoot even a frame. That’s been a huge breakthrough. But then we have this thing about making it look raw, and one of the things we’ve come up with is to have the animators do their own camera moves. On *CLOSED MONDAYS* we were using motion control, really rigid motion control equipment to try to make these totally fluid moves. Here, we decided we wanted to have a hand-held look for the entire thing, as if the whole thing was shot almost like on a Hi-8 camera. The camera gets moved by the animator in a clunky style, and when it’s all done we go back and put in a camera shake which makes it look like the whole thing is shot almost like *HILL STREET BLUES*.”

“What’s special about this show is every week it’s a little movie,” said producer Adam Small, “it’s not your typical sitcom, with your living room set and the wacky next door neighbor. Every week you’re in a different city. There are like fifty-three locations in each show. They’re in Vegas and next week they’re in Hollywood and the next week Washington, D.C. You introduce a whole new cast of characters each week.”

Admitted Vinton, “It’s pretty wild.” □

MEMENTO

*Time flows backwards in
Chris Nolan's intriguing thriller.*

By Mitch Persons

A disheveled and begrimed former insurance investigator named Leonard Shelby (Guy Pearce) is seen reliving a murder he has just committed. What makes the memory doubly horrifying is that the murder unrolls in reverse, the bullet retreating from the victim's skull and then slamming back into the barrel of a gun that Shelby is wielding.

That highly unsettling scene is the opener of Newmarket's mystery thriller, *MEMENTO*, a *noir* thriller with a twist: Shelby suffers from a rare memory disorder: He can recall long-term incidents, but cannot remember what has transpired only minutes, sometimes seconds before. Shelby is trying to locate the man he believes raped and murdered his wife, but because of his condition he is perpetually trapped in a nightmarish, non-linear time-frame—finding himself, at one point, running through a trailer park, with no idea how he arrived

there, no inkling as to whether he is chasing someone, or if he himself is being chased. Peppered throughout this ordeal are the kinds of characters who make *noir* such a deliciously wicked medium, including Teddy (Joe Pantoliano), a perpetually grinning sycophant, and Natalie (Carrie-Anne Moss), an acerbic barmaid.

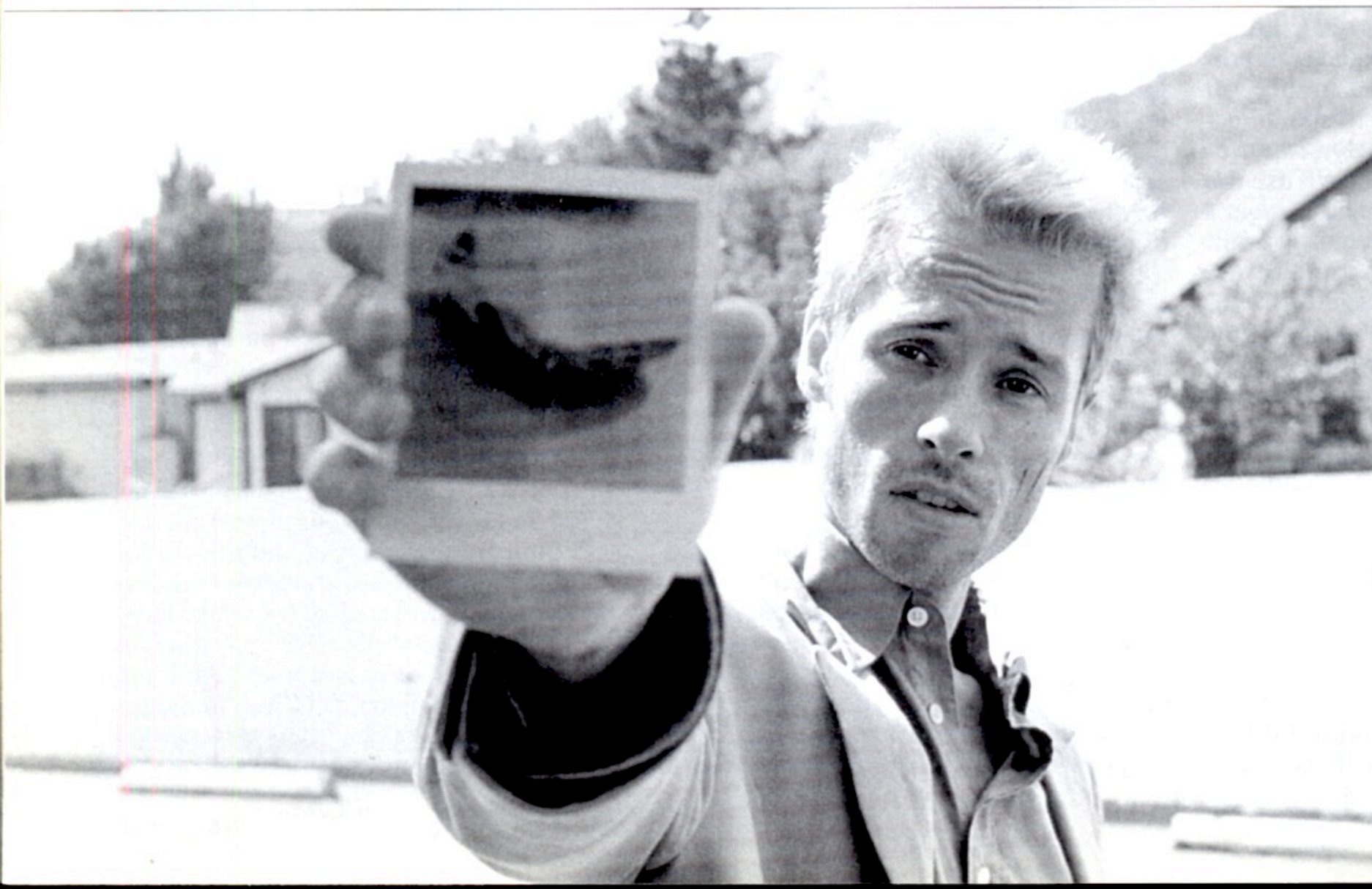
The Suzanne and Jennifer Todd-produced film definitely holds your interest, but at times your head may ache from trying to figure out what's going on. The murder, seen at the beginning of *MEMENTO*, is actually the *end* of the story, with disjointed events taking place in between. The *denouement*, which pops up three-quarters of the way through, does explain most of the loose ends, but does not stop the barrage of shattering experiences, or the possible feeling of cranial agitation.

The writer/director of this brain teaser is 29-year-old Christopher Nolan, who is, as he put it, "half-English, half American, born in London, now living three years in Cali-

fornia." Nolan's reputation as a director of *noir* began with his debut film, *FOLLOWING*, a no-budget indie that wound up being praised by the *New Yorker's* Bruce Diones as, "[a film which] echoes Hitchcock's classics...but Nolan's story is leaner and meaner than those thrillers."

"That review pretty much made my day," said Nolan in his suave, British accent. "I have always admired Hitchcock, always admired the way he managed to have a manipulative point of view. The original *MEMENTO* was a short short written by my younger brother, Jonathan. I took what Jonathan had in mind and expanded it, but without losing Jonathan's original concept. The film, like the story, is told from Leonard's perspective; the audience is put completely into Leonard's head. *MEMENTO* is told backwards, from the end to the beginning—a successive series of flashbacks, further and further back in time. The audience is denied the benefit of information that would normally come their way in

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY: Guy Pearce as Leonard, a man whose attempt to stave off chronological crisis forces him to rely on tattoo artists, Magic Markers, and instant photos.



a sequential order, and they are thrust into this maelstrom of half-remembered experiences. When Leonard meets somebody in the film, the audience is perplexed as to who that person is, and why he or she is there. But also, ideally, they are intrigued and interested to find out more. It is manipulation of the most subtle kind.

"That's the basic dynamic of the story. Leonard has this peculiar memory condition. Throughout the film he keeps alluding to this, and also pointing out that he does not have amnesia, as many of the characters think he does. Leonard has short-term memory, which is a little bit different from amnesia because he does know who he is. He knows all

MEMENTO

Carrie-Anne Moss

By Mitch Persons

The zigzag puzzle that was Chris Nolan's *MEMENTO* screenplay was something which that at first confounded Carrie-Anne Moss, the actress better known as the black leather-clad Trinity from *THE MATRIX*. "What I did to prepare for my part of Natalie," said Moss, "was I first took the script apart and put it the other way around. I read it many times, and then I took my scenes out and I turned them around so that they were in the actual sequence of what happened, so that I knew where Natalie was coming from. I didn't work on it backwards. I rearranged the story and made my own story line from front to back.

"That idea, of putting the scenes in sequential order, that idea was half mine, and half my acting teacher's. She was very confused by the script." Laughter. "She did it, and I had wanted to do it, and Christopher [Nolan] had said, 'Don't do it,' because I think he was afraid that if somebody got their hands on what was a more conventional story, they might turn it around, or might not think that it worked, whatever. But I did take it apart, and I worked on it in sequence to find my character."

To say that *MEMENTO*'s Natalie is a volatile type is an understatement. She can appear sympathetic and vulnerable, then, in the next scene, can become verbally abusive to the point of violence. "Natalie lives in a very dark world," continued Moss. "Her boyfriend is a drug dealer, and he's no longer around. She suspects that he's dead, she is being pressured by bad people, and she's trying to save her own life. Her reactions to what is happening are motivated by her need to survive. In one scene, Natalie is throwing out the garbage behind her bar when she thinks she sees her boyfriend Jimmy [Larry Holden] pull up in his car. She takes a look in the car and sees that it is not her boyfriend, but Leonard. She reacts with a mild, 'Oops, sorry. Wrong person.' Now, another woman, one who wasn't quite as street-wise as Natalie, might have reacted with suspicion or fear or anger. Natalie lives in her own world, a world of, *I'll stab you, you stab me — anyone can be fucking you over at any time*. And so when she sees that the man in the car is not Jimmy, she doesn't know what's going on, so she's piecing it



all together, like, 'What's happening here? Who is this person?' A million things are going through her mind at that point, and then she goes away, and she's trying to figure everything out.

"I think Natalie is used to being in situations like this, but I'm sure she's been involved in worse things, where she's had to pretend everything's okay, then had to find her way through it, to make sure she gets out all right. I always think, like in my own life, with somebody bad you maybe act nonchalant, so you can get out of it."

There are moments in the film when Natalie's façade of vulnerability drops, especially in those moments when she seems to take advantage of Leonard, *MEMENTO*'s chronologically-challenged protagonist. "She wants to use Leonard to get what she wants. She manipulates him, and she knows that she is manipulating him. I don't really see her as a bad person, though. I see her as a very, very, very screwed-up person, and a very lost person, and somebody who'll do really whatever she needs to do to get what she wants. Very manipulative; very dark. That's hard for me, because I would never do anything even remotely manipulative to another person — I'm really not like that at all. So I had to find something very real for her to go to that extreme, to be that cruel and that mean. But she is fighting for her life. She's afraid.

"I feel that even with the times she is manipulating Leonard, she really does care about him, and the fact that a woman cares

about a man and he doesn't remember her because he has this [memory] condition, it's sort of a major rejection. I really saw that in Natalie's last scene, which is her *first* scene in the movie. She lets Leonard walk by, and then she grabs him, and it's like, *Okay, he's just not going to remember me*. She says to him in the scene before that — which is the scene *after* that in the movie — she kisses him and says, 'Will you remember me?' He says 'No,' and she says, 'I think you will.' And then he doesn't. So she thinks, 'Ah, this one's not going to work.'

What does seem to work in *MEMENTO*, at least for Moss, is being around people like Nolan and an old *compadre* of hers from *THE MATRIX*, actor Joe Pantoliano. "Chris is very young, but he's really mature—very level-headed and calm, very great to work with. I'd work with him again in a heartbeat, I loved working with him. As for Joey Pants [Pantoliano's nickname], he's a great person to have around. He's such a talented actor, and he has such a passion for his art. He's a joy to any set.

"Joey and I see each other a lot, because we're friends. I actually recommended him for the part he plays in *MEMENTO*. Not that he needs any help getting a job, because he's such a fine actor, but when I read the script, I instantly thought of Joey. I thought that the character, Teddy, had his voice. When he heard that, Joey laughed. He calls me his agent. I just love him." □

MEMENTO

Joe Pantoliano



By Mitch Persons

“Yeah, hi,” Joe Pantoliano shouted into his cell-phone when we called to arrange an interview. “Listen, I’d be happy to talk with you, but right now I’m on a bus, and it’s kinda noisy. Call me back in a couple of days.”

How very Joe Pantoliano of him.

His close friends affectionately call him “Joey Pants.” To millions of moviegoers he is Guido, the excitable “killer pimp” of *RISKY BUSINESS*; Caesar, the paranoid, victimized money launderer of *BOUND*; or Cypher, the soft-spoken revolutionary of *THE MATRIX*. To his many fans, though, he is Joe Pantoliano, character actor *extraordinaire*, a veteran of over 70 films, and now the co-star of Newmarket’s psychological thriller, *MEMENTO*.

Pantoliano sounded more relaxed when we called him a week later at his home in Connecticut. In fact, the 47-year-old, Hoboken, New Jersey native was quite easy to talk to—miles away from the sleazy characters he sometimes plays. Highly articulate and sensitive about his craft, he also possesses a keen sense of humor: When it was mentioned that *MEMENTO* director Christopher Nolan thought he was the greatest thing since cream cheese, Pantoliano replied, “Well, sure. I saved his movie.”

Conceding he was only joking, Panto-

liano noted, “I was actually pretty pleased to be in the film. My character, Teddy... Well, there’s this guy Leonard in the movie [Guy Pearce], and everybody’s using Leonard in this movie, you know? Natalie [Carrie-Anne Moss] is using him, the clerk in the motel he’s staying in [Mark Boone Junior] is using him. I don’t want to give away the movie for the reader who’s going to read this article, but Teddy takes care of Leonard. He genuinely likes Leonard, and he’s discovered a way to use Leonard in a way that’s—what’s the word I’m looking for?—advantageous for Teddy, and also fulfills Leonard’s need to survive. But the beginning of the movie, which is really the end of the movie—everything in between is told in flashbacks—Teddy realizes there is money in the trunk of Leonard’s car. Leonard doesn’t know that, and part of the story is my trying to get him to give me that car so that I can get that money.”

Money appears to be an obsession with Teddy, as it did with Caesar in *BOUND*, one of Pantoliano’s personal favorites: “In the course of a day, people come up to me to discuss their favorite movie of mine, and it’s so subjective, it’s based on what their frame of mind is. But people come up and say, ‘The best thing you’ve ever done is *MIDNIGHT RUN* or *RISKY BUSINESS* or *LA BAMBA* or *THE TAXMAN* or *EMPIRE OF THE SUN* or *THE FUGITIVE*.’ It depends on who the person is. I would put

BOUND up there with some of my favorite movies I’ve been in. Most of the time—well, not most of the time, but a good part of the time—I get saddled with roles that aren’t fully flushed out, so I have to really go overtime to create a character that is full and has some time on-screen to make him real important and entertaining. When you get a role like the Teddy role in *MEMENTO* or Caesar in *BOUND*, one that is so fully there on the page, it just makes your life as an actor a lot easier.

“I guess you can tell that I put a lot of stock in the writing of a screenplay, especially when it’s good—scripts like *MEMENTO* or *BOUND* or *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*. But those screenplays don’t come along that often. I would say that sixty percent of my film resume were jobs that I had to take in order to make the car payment, and keep my kids in private school. When that happens, it’s every man for himself—you’re just trying to find some logic and trying to work on something that God knows why they gave anybody the money to do it; to try to survive the train wreck.

“But that’s elemental; it’s getting the acting job that’s the hard part. It’s being able to continue the employment that’s hard. The greatest success I’ve had as an actor is that I’ve been able to survive this business for this long, and make a living at it. It continues; it’s a daily job—it’s every day. It’s work, work, work.”

Doesn’t he find that, as a character actor, he has more movie roles coming his way than somebody like Kevin Costner, who is considered a leading man?

“Yeah, but Kevin Costner only has to do one movie. I have to go ten years to make what he made in that one movie. That’s why I’m a character actor, because I have to pay the rent. Character acting for me is the way I was trained as an actor—to play roles that you are different from. Kevin Costner is Kevin Costner in every movie that he does. That’s why I would pay eight dollars to go and see him. Character actors, on the other hand—Marlon Brando and Robert DeNiro and Paul Muni and Dustin Hoffman—those are truly character actors. The only reason I’m a character actor is because of the roles that I’m getting. But to be able to play a second lead in *MEMENTO*, or to have that male lead in *BOUND*, to have the title role in *THE TAXMAN*—every once in a while those are opportunities that make me happy.” □

about his long-term past, but he can't create memory. He has completely lost that ability, yet he keeps having these disturbing flashbacks which manage to propel him further into his quest."

The flashbacks that Leonard experiences are filmed partly in color, partly in a gritty black-and-white. "The color sequences," continues Nolan, "are not really total flashbacks. They are mostly what Leonard is seeing and experiencing in the now. The black-and-white sections—actually one section segmented between the color parts—is a more objective experience, and one that gives subtle and not-so-subtle clues as to what

is really happening. Thus, the two threads of the film are the subjective and the objective coming together to form the solution. Until that solution arrives, no one really knows what is actually happening, who is a good guy, or who is a bad guy. Is Teddy really Leonard's friend? Is Natalie a sadist or a saint? What is her connection to Leonard? And what has Leonard himself become? Is he still an insurance investigator? A criminal on the run? Maybe both?

"What we have here, really, is a different perspective on the whole *noir* genre—betrayal, double-cross, that kind of thing. The way the film is structured is the way Leonard sees the world, which is more than a little bent. At the same time, it is the way we see Leonard, which is pretty straightforward. Underlying everything is a feeling of uneasiness, of dark deeds done somewhere out of reach, of questions that might have very sinister answers. That uneasiness is very much a part of basic *noir*, and one we wanted to keep, even with the jigsaw puzzle-type approach."

That approach—maneuvering the audience by handing them pieces of the puzzle as the film progresses—has been used before in psychological twisters such as *MIRAGE* (1965), the all-but-forgotten *NIGHT WITHOUT SLEEP* (1952), and in a film very near and dear to Nolan, Hitchcock's *PSYCHO*. "As far as the issue of controlling the audience in *PSYCHO*," said Nolan, "Hitchcock attempted things that had never been done before. There were his usual high-comedy teases, 'Mother is not herself today,' 'We all go a little mad sometimes, don't we?' that gave clues to the fact that everything was not all that it seemed. Then he really pulled out all the stops. You're just stunned when we see the heroine [Janet Leigh] absolutely brutally killed, and then



LOVE CAN KILL: Carrie Anne Moss is Natalie, a barmaid whose motivations may not be as straightforward as they finally appear.

we see somebody who's complicit in her murder as far as we know clean up after the act. From that point onward, *PSYCHO* is pretty much a standard mystery. All the clues are thrown out in the pre-shower scenes, and it is up to the members of the audience—who by this time are scared out of their minds—to figure out the ending.

"*MEMENTO* is told in an incredibly specific way, told as subjectively as possible. The story really unfolds in this guy's head. If the story were told any other way, I think we would have an incredibly different perspective on the events as we see them. People often ask me whether the structure of the film or the content of the film are inseparable, or where the structure is different as opposed to the material. The honest truth is this story has to be told in the way it is, otherwise it could become a very different story. If you examine *PSYCHO* closely, you see that even with the change of point of view, we are drawn into the story initially because we are experiencing what is going on inside Janet Leigh's head. We see what she sees, feel what she feels.

"Fortunately for us, we have an actor, Guy Pearce, who is versatile enough to allow us to get inside Leonard's mind and see the turmoil that is going on in there. Without giving away too much of the plot, Guy has an unsympathetic role and he manages to make it sympathetic, the same way he did when he played Ed Exley in *L.A. CONFIDENTIAL*. He's an extraordinary actor.

"Carrie-Anne Moss, who plays Natalie, is another lucky find for us. Natalie is a woman who appears tough as nails, and at times *is* as tough as nails, but she also has a softer, vulnerable side. We needed an actress who could bring this off for *MEMENTO*. After seeing Carrie as Trinity in *THE*

MATRIX, I thought she would be ideal for the part of Natalie, as she and Trinity share a lot of character traits. The vulnerability may be a little harder to spot in Trinity, but there are inklings, and that is exactly what I wanted for Natalie."

Nolan is obviously pleased with his two stars, but his most ardent praise goes to his second lead, Joe Pantoliano. "*MEMENTO* is the ultimate Joe Pants [Pantoliano's nickname] film, because he really gets the show on in a way that's underplayed; really subtle work. The funny thing with Joe is to me he was perfect casting. He looks very different in every role he does, but you always kind of recognize him. He was in *THE MATRIX* with Carrie-Anne, but it took the longest time before you realized who the actor was. It's like you can't quite place him, and then you sort of catch it. In our film he looks very, very different than he did in *THE MATRIX*."

"Then too, you have these associations with the type of character Joe often plays. This works really well in our film—he wants the audience to have the kind of back-of-the-mind association and make assumptions about him the way the protagonist does. As the film progresses, I think Joe really manages to turn our heads. Right near the end of the film, there are nine pages of dialogue. Joe filmed the whole thing in one day. His incredibly subtle work really changes the tenor of the film.

Having finished *MEMENTO*, which debuted in March, Nolan is starting work on a new film. "It is a cop thriller called *INSOMNIA*. The film had already been done in 1997 by Norwegian director Erik Skjoldbjaerg. I'm taking it and perhaps giving it a few twists, a la *MEMENTO*, with maybe an homage or two to Hitchcock thrown in." □

Royal Space Force The Wings of Honneamise

Astronauts have “The Wrong Stuff” as an undiscovered SF classic debuts on DVD.

By Andrew Osmond

“When I was a kid, I wanted to be a Navy pilot. You had to join the Navy if you wanted to fly jets. They were so fast, flew so high — for me there could be nothing better than flying. But two months before I was to graduate from school, I saw my grades weren’t going to let me do any of that.

“And so I ended up joining the Space Force.”

So opens the highly unconventional WINGS OF HONNEAMISE, an anime feature which flopped on its Japanese release, but is now seen by fans as both a first-class piece of science-fiction and a milestone in Japanese animation. Set in an imaginary otherworld broadly similar

to our own but different in the finer details, the film is one of the most accessible works of anime available in the west, combining sumptuous artwork with an unashamedly cerebral, humanist approach.

In the nation of Honneamise, slacker protagonist Shiro Lhadatt (who delivers the above monologue) finds himself inspired by the faith of a strange young woman, and impulsively volunteers to be the first man in space. He is put through a gruelling series of training exercises, harried by taunting journalists, pursued by rioting activists, and confronted with political games far over his head. But does Shiro actually believe in what he’s doing? Is the space program a wasteful PR stunt? Worse, is it (and Shiro) being used by Honneamise’s military to provoke the neighboring country (Cold War

analogies are legion)? And more to the point of the film’s grander purpose, is the Space Force worthy of only a slacker’s contempt... or does its work have spiritual meaning, not just for Shiro, but for humanity?

Hard questions, but HONNEAMISE raises them with a subtlety and introspection rarely anticipated in anime. The film is far more interested in people than the over-compressed AKIRA, with a less arcane philosophy than GHOST IN THE SHELL. Its main protagonists, while young, are more mature than anime’s usual school-age juniors. The central relationship between Shiro and the devout Riquinni is ambiguous but intriguing. It offers more questions than answers, but the questions are worth thinking about.

One of the film’s biggest assets is its

SAME TIME, ANOTHER PLACE: At once hauntingly familiar yet distinctly off-beat, the alt-universe of HONNEAMISE demonstrates animation’s potential for building realities with a level of detail only rarely achieved in live-action.



gorgeous presentation. Apart from a couple of set-pieces in the second half, HONNEAMISE is not action or effects-driven, yet it's hard to imagine it in live-action without a nightmarishly high budget. There's no other alien civilization on-screen that's designed with such sumptuous detail, from public vehicles to eating implements, from the exotic patterns in the clothing to the predominance of angels in the architecture. The combination of compelling story and generous detail mean the film rewards multiple viewings.

HONNEAMISE was released in Japan in 1987, a year before AKIRA (a film too many Western journalists take as the start-point for "serious" anime). For many viewers, HONNEAMISE was their introduction to Studio Gainax, whose history has become a legend among anime fans. Gainax's founders were shameless fanboys themselves. The team's first animated works were for fan conventions in Japan: Short films which gleefully spoofed anime, SF movies, and TV shows like ULTRAMAN.

Their big break came with the 'pilot' short, ROYAL SPACE FORCE, a treatment for a possible full-length feature film. Executive producer Toshio Okada pitched the film to corporate giant Bandai. This was at the time of Japan's 'bubble' economy, when many companies were funding new anime projects. Bandai liked the idea, forwarding Gainax a budget of 800 million yen (not 8 billion as reported in some quarters, but still one of the biggest budgets for an anime film) under the original title: WINGS OF HONNEAMISE ROYAL SPACE FORCE.

Behind the scenes was a roster of soon-to-be anime stars. Hideaki Anno, who served as animation director, special effects artist, and one of the character designers on HONNEAMISE, went on to fame as director of such TV series as GUNBUSTER (a space war show involving relativity and cute girl heroines), NADIA (a reworking of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA via FLASH GORDON) and NEON GENESIS EVANGELION (a cross between a giant robot show and JERRY SPRINGER). All three titles are available on video. Anno's latest TV venture is KARE KANO, aka HIS AND HER CIRCUMSTANCES, a high-school comedy-romance. Music director Ryuichi Sakamoto is familiar to Western audiences for his work on such live-action-

ers as MERRY CHRISTMAS MR LAWRENCE and THE LAST EMPEROR. Main character designer Yoshiyuki Sadamoto worked in the same capacity on NADIA and EVANGELION. Writer/director Hiroyuki Yamaga later scripted a non-Gainax production, the popular anime video series GUNDAM OO80: A WAR IN THE POCKET.

While many would say the real-life Space Age is long over, HONNEAMISE's scenario of rival power-blocs battling



THE NEW HERO?: When Shiro Lhadatt volunteers to be Honneamise's first man in space, he barely knows what he's getting himself into. By the time he is able to look down on the whole of his world, he's grown in ways few of his contemporaries can imagine.

over the final frontier still has a Western resonance. With its present-day technology and realistic space-travel, HONNEAMISE has often been likened to such based-on-fact productions as THE RIGHT STUFF and APOLLO 13, but it also scores relevant points in areas that have nothing to do with the space race, nowhere more tellingly than in the pungent depiction of Shiro's growing addiction to fame.

HONNEAMISE also owes more than a bit to its anime predecessors. The beautiful depiction of Shiro's first test flight—an early highlight of the film—feels akin to the ecstatic airborne sequences in Hayao Miyazaki's KIKI'S DELIVERY SERVICE (though Shiro's physical reaction to the flight brings things rapidly to earth). HONNEAMISE's alt-Earth setting is not unlike the steampunk world of Hayao Miyazaki's

LAPUTA, or the 'Europeanised' Japan of Hiroyuki Okiura's JIN-ROH (scripted by GHOST IN THE SHELL director Mamoru Oshii).

At the end, an orbiting Shiro addresses the world, delivering a speech that contrasts in many ways with the one that opens the film. In the original script—as translated in



the subbed version—his words are effectively a call for reflection, a request for humanity to recognize its opportunities and perils. It's not so much a 'message' as Shiro's demonstration that he has matured into a man who cares. (The dub spoils the effect by offering some sub-Roddenberry sermonising about 'worlds without borders' that's out of tone with the rest of the film.)

In both versions, the speech is followed by a remarkable montage showing the history of civilisation. Hypnotic and moving, it's a truly great piece of Japanese animation, leaving all glib platitudes light-years behind. It's sequences like these that make HONNEAMISE worthy of any SF buff's time. □

My Own Private Shyamalan

By Dan Persons

I think I'd like to talk to M. Night Shyamalan. This is an uncharacteristic position for me—I usually prefer to follow Kubrick's philosophy: Once a film is out of its creator's hands, it's out in all senses of the term. Whatever the director actually intended is of less consequence than what is perceived on the screen—it falls to viewers to suss out the intent and determine how successfully it was achieved.

Nevertheless, there are times when one has to concede defeat. Viewing *UNBREAKABLE*, Shyamalan's follow-up to the phenomenally successful *THE SIXTH SENSE*, is one of those times. So please get me Mr. Shyamalan on the phone; I want to be sure I'm clear on this.

Here's one I guarantee you haven't heard before: Bruce Willis is David Dunn, your everyday, working shlub who just so happens to survive a horrific train crash. Did I say survive? I'm minimizing the feat: He escapes untouched. Not a broken bone, not a ruptured organ, not a bruise, not a scratch. A sole survivor—the only one able to walk away from the calamity and back into his troubled marriage, just a little stunned but also slowly becoming aware that, in the whole of his life, he's never suffered so much as a head cold.

Okay, so far, so very *TWILIGHT ZONE*. If you saw the *UNBREAKABLE* promos or any of the clips that accompanied Bruce Willis' numerous TV appearances—and especially if you saw either *SIXTH SENSE* or *FINAL DESTINATION*—you may think you've got this thing pegged: We're back in the Dead Zone, that realm where the rules of mortality have been suspended, that place where a soul arrives to learn a sharp lesson about the meaning of life. You might think we'll be meeting up with a few old friends: some incorporeal spirits, perhaps, or an intangible force seeking redress for a natural cycle thrown suddenly out of balance. And if you still think that's what *UNBREAKABLE* is about, then you haven't actually seen the film, and I suggest you skip the rest of this review; we're about to go into de-



tails that are best unveiled in the course of watching.

Here's where Shyamalan starts throwing curves. Up pops Elijah Price (Samuel L. Jackson), in natty clothes and bad hair. He's a comic-book nerd, and not just *any* comic-book nerd—he's a deadly serious, nigh-unto-evangelistic comic book nerd who believes the stories told in those pulp pages are rooted in a greater reality. He is suffering from a rare disease, one that makes his bones as brittle as glass, and has convinced himself that, if he is eminently breakable, his counterpart—a man so unbreakable that he may cheat death, a man who, in the grand mythos as scribed by Siegel and Shuster and Kane and Lee, has a moral obligation to apply his invulnerability towards a greater good—must also exist. And so Mr. Price shows up at Mr. Dunn's doorstep, determined to make the former *MOONLIGHTING* star the world's Superman.

I once tried to sum up Tim Burton's original *BATMAN* in this way: "What if some ordinary schmoe thought he was Batman, and it turned out he was right?" It seems Shyamalan has long been toying with the same idea, and has now managed to go me two or three better. *UNBREAKABLE*, it turns out, is a superhero movie, but one so grounded in reality as to turn the concept completely on its head. All the expected trappings have been abandoned—the stylized backgrounds, the megalomaniacal super-villains, the spandex. When Dunn finally rises to his

heroic destiny, it's in a gnarly, rubber rain slicker. The evil he battles is as down-to-Earth and repulsive as a serial rapist/murderer. Set against the cast-iron skies of Philadelphia—as was *SIXTH SENSE*—*UNBREAKABLE* offers us no fantasy world to escape to. We're in the here-and-now, where something amazing has happened.

Shyamalan treats all this with a gravity that borders on the ludicrous (nowhere more so than in a discomfiting scene in which Dunn's son—convinced of Price's prophesies—turns a gun on his father). It's exactly the same tone he applied to *SIXTH SENSE*, and here's where I begin to hunger for a clearer understanding of the director's intent. It's no secret that Shyamalan wrote this film quickly, that he wrote it after completing *SIXTH SENSE*, that he wrote it with Bruce Willis in mind. Did he also anticipate the same *SIXTH SENSE* audience coming to see it, an audience that might well be expecting the same kind of emotional journey? This is not an idle question; in contrast to *SENSE*, *UNBREAKABLE*'s solemnity is deceptive. It conceals a wicked outlook, and a tarter point to be made than *SENSE*'s bittersweet ruminations about life, death, and love. Did Shyamalan have this misdirection in mind? Has he dared offer us a follow-up that actually deconstructs his previous success?

When, as in *SENSE*, *UNBREAKABLE*'s final double-

twist comes (and if any criticism is to be leveled at the film, it's that Shyamalan has relied too heavily on the same narrative template as his prior work), don't be surprised to sense an almost-palpable shudder travel through your viewing companions—at the screening I attended, some audience members went as far as to hiss the closing credits. The last time I encountered so fervent a *we-was-robbed* reaction was with *BLUE VELVET*. No surprise: Lynch has frequently assumed an adversarial position with his audience, taking them to places where they hadn't expected to go. Shyamalan, buoyed on prior success, may have similarly dared to embrace his audience's anticipation and reward them, not with *SENSE*'s heart-breaking afterglow, but with a hard-edged challenge to generally accepted notions of heroism, morality, and the nature of true evil. Is *UNBREAKABLE* a worthy follow-up? I don't know. If all of this was a result of a misapplication of form to story, then the movie stands as a curious, mostly fulfilling effort. If it was done with intent, then *UNBREAKABLE* may be the most dangerous film to have come out of a major studio in 2000. □

Unbreakable

Touchstone Pictures, 2000. Starring: Bruce Willis; Samuel L. Jackson; Robin Wright Penn; Spencer Treat Clark. Written, produced, and directed by M. Night Shyamalan. Produced by Barry Mendel and Sam Mercer. Executive Producers: Gary Barber and Roger Birnbaum. Director of Photography: Eduardo Serra, A.F.C. Production Designer: Larry Fulton. PG-13 (U.S.).

Gory Glory

Argento reinvents *giallo* in NONHOSONNO



By Alan Jones

Finally, the *tour de force* every Dario Argento buff has been waiting for has arrived. NONHOSONNO (Italian for I CAN'T SLEEP blurred together to fit into the director's one-word title canon) is unquestionably his finest *giallo* picture since OPERA, and as accomplished and galvanizing as THE BIRD WITH THE CRYSTAL PLUMAGE and TENEBRAE. Geared around clever visual and aural cues to the identity of an assassin using a dark nursery rhyme as a murder blueprint, Argento's return to sleight-of-hand virtuosity is a major cause for celebration. World premiered in Turin on January 4, 2001, NONHOSONNO (no official export title yet) is the biggest boxoffice hit the director has had in his home territory in over a decade.

After three women are horrendously mutilated in Turin, widowed detective Ulisse Moretti (Max Von Sydow) is pulled out of retirement to help police investigate the new batch of crimes, all of

which bear the hallmarks of a serial killer Moretti thought he'd closed the book on in 1983. Haunted by the fact that he clearly accused the wrong person—a dwarf author of *giallo* tales who was subsequently shot dead by his own mother (Rossella Falk) to avoid imprisonment—the frail Moretti must try and piece together the de-ranked modus operandi of the unhinged maniac, based on a chapter in a yellowing children's storybook titled *Death Farm*, while the homicides intensify and warp into ever more surreal juvenilia. But why has the devious slaughter recommenced after all these years? And what is the motive for the vicious, hardcore violence? The answer to those questions has a devastating impact not only on the fragile existence of Moretti, but on the son of the last victim in Moretti's casebook, Giacomo (Stefano Dionisi), and Giacomo's new lover, classical harpist Gloria (Chiara Caselli).

Beginning in the grandstanding SUSPIRIA tradition with a sustained symphony of terror on a

moving train, ending in a DEEP RED pool of dripping blood, NONHOSONNO goes for the whodunit jugular all the way through. Argento artfully combines set pieces and red herrings with full-throttle pulp dynamics—many will be surprised by the contemporary look that cinematographer Ronnie (OPERA) Taylor has brought to the first episode in Argento's planned Animal Trilogy. The baroque flamboyance of DEEP RED's Turin has been replaced by an ultra-realistic sheen; the introduction of a go-go dancer victim is as electrically day-glo as it is atypical of anything Argento has previously attempted. Sandwiched between the *giallo* conventions Argento has made his own is one perfectly modulated jolt after another. The main set-piece—one that will be as reverentially talked about as the TENEBRAE roof crawl and the OPERA auditorium descent—is an astonishing, foot-level slow pan along a theatre carpet. Dancers, the audience, stagehands, a cleaner with a Hoover and the assassin walk in and out of

frame before the camera finally holds on a strangled ballerina's shoes and the still-twitching, severed head that suddenly enters the frame. An absolute stunner.

Argento also reinvents the maniac point-of-view shot, and each murder is admirably augmented by Sergio Stivaletti's wincingly realistic gore makeups. Exploding heads, severed fingers (and fingernails), slit throats, fountain pens through skulls, sinister puppets, nude prostitutes continually punched in the head (the only possible MPAA worry), NONHOSONNO has it all. Everything is superbly choreographed to a thunderously effective Goblin score (Argento's initial choice, Goran Bregovich, wanted too much money), complete with hauntingly familiar riffs from their own Argento back-catalogue.

Von Sydow provides something in NONHOSONNO that few Argento stars have ever attempted: actual acting. The Swedish megastar centers Argento's chiller in a truly profound way, with a credible and sensitive performance. Falk similarly makes the most of her limited, angst-ridden scenes; a shame the same can't be said about Dionisi, who is definitely the weakest link in Argento's chain of damaged deception. Larded through with murky family secrets and more suspects than a CAT O'NINE TAILS, NONHOSONNO's tightly constructed story makes complete sense, with every loose end satisfactorily tied up. Argento's triumphant redefinition of his *giallo* roots is a sustained masterwork of epic brilliance, one that his fans should embrace with overwhelming joy and renewed devotion.

Nonhosonno

Executive producer, Claudio Argento. Director, Dario Argento. Screenplay, Dario Argento, Franco Ferrini & Carlo Lucarelli, based on a story by Argento & Ferrini. Music, Goblin. Special visual effects, Sergio Stivaletti. Starring Max Von Sydow, Stefano Dionisi, Chiara Caselli, Rossella Falk, Paolo Maria Scalondro, Roberto Zibetti. 120 mins. Cert 14 (Italy). Not yet rated by MPAA (America).

The Film Doesn't Bite

By John Thonen

Wilhelm Murnau is a legendary figure in the history of German cinema. He made dozens of films in his relatively short career, but most are known only to a few film buffs, and many are lost forever. His one enduring legacy is *NOSFERATU*, a 1922 German production that has inspired scores of subsequent vampire films. Filmmaker E. Elias Merhige, a consummate aficionado of Murnau's work, and that of other expressionist directors of the period (Fritz Lang, G. W. Pabst, etc.), has spent the last three years of his life creating *SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival.

John Malkovich is an obsessive Murnau, cryptic as he pursues the creation of his latest film, *NOSFERATU*. Willem Dafoe portrays Max Schreck — an even more fictionalized depiction than that of Murnau. In reality, Schreck, who was so effective as the vampire, was a stage actor with the Max Reinhardt company, and made several other films besides *NOSFERATU*, although many people to this day seem to think his life was shrouded in mystery and that he was never seen again after *NOSFERATU* was finished. Screenwriter Steven Katz plays up those misconceptions, depicting Schreck as an early example of Method acting who becomes so engrossed in his role that he actually starts killing crew members and drinking their blood. Dafoe submerges himself in the character, much the way the real Schreck is supposed to have assumed the Count Orlock persona. His performance is so startling that Martin Landau's Oscar win for *ED WOOD* no longer seems a once-in-a-lifetime portrayal. Dafoe's makeup renders his famous face unrecognizable, not that the vulture-like visage that made him so creepy in *eXistenZ* was what got him the role: Dafoe and Malkovich are two of Merhige's favorite modern actors, and the thought of having them together in one project was too good to resist.

The project was heavily researched by Merhige, who talked



to former crewmembers of the real Murnau, and who could attest to his genius, and also his peculiarities. The film presents the Germany of the 1920s with detailed accuracy. The camera used by the director's crew is an actual wooden-framed box camera that the real Murnau used during this period. His people wear lab coats and goggles, giving the bizarre impression of scientific racecar drivers. Merhige's film-within-a-film is so relentless in conjuring up the period and its characters that during the shooting sequences, we see the film dissolve into a closing iris effect and switch to black and white footage, appearing grainy and primitive alongside the lavish color cinematography of the rest of the film. Shot on location in ancient Luxembourg castles, Merhige again pays homage to his predecessor Murnau, who unlike his German contemporaries went to the expense of using location shooting to insure realism. Occasionally, actual footage from the original *NOSFERATU* is seamlessly edited in, the only telltale signs being the deterioration of the original filmstock.

If the campy, comic persona affected by Malkovich at the film's beginning reminds viewers of Johnny Depp's Ed Wood, it's because of the film's blending of fantasy with reality. "The difference," claimed Merhige, "is that Wood was a hack, but Murnau was a genius!" But Malkovich's performance veers further away from tragicomedy as the film progress-

es, becoming positively disturbing for its intensity. Dafoe is such a good actor, that he is able to play Schreck as an amateur, whose obsessions get in the way of doing his job in front of the camera. British comedian Eddie Izzard plays the film's leading man, and though he considers the person he portrayed a lousy actor in reality, Izzard comes off as an eminently watchable silent screen star.

The atmosphere of realism is enhanced by scenes of drug use, bisexual orgies and the implication of a sadomasochistic affair between the director and his leading lady. Eventually, he even agrees to sacrifice her to the Count in order to get his vision on the screen—his art means more to him than any personal friendships, agreements or commitments, and his ruthlessness competes with Schreck's for power.

In his homage to one of Germany's greatest directors, Merhige has directed the kind of horror movie we don't see any more. Though there is blood and violence, the film is thankfully free of the splashy effects, quick-cutting, or CGI that has been used *ad nauseum* in modern films. Scenes dissolve slowly into new shots, with a lyrical feel and pacing that is never rushed, but never drags, either. One feels as if a keyhole onto an actual historical documentary has opened up: Dafoe's makeup (Schreck is never shown as anything but his on-screen persona) looks great; Katja Reinert adequately recreates the look of the

original Greta, while adding more realistic touches that the genuine Schreck never had to contend with; period costuming and standing sets enable the viewer to lose himself in the docu-drama feel of *SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE*. Whether the general public, raised on *FRIDAY THE 13TH* and similar schlock will get as big a kick out of this historical drama as I did remains to be seen, but it will doubtless be a film to be reckoned with at Academy Awards time.

Shadow of the Vampire

Lion's Gate, 2000. Starring John Malkovich (F.W. Murnau); Willem Dafoe (Max Schreck); Udo Kier (Albin Grau); Cary Elwes (Fritz Wagner); Catherine McCormack (Greta Schroeder); Eddie Izzard (Gustav von Wangenheim); Aden Gillett (Henrick Galeen); Ronan Vibert (Wolfgang Muller); Ingeborga Dapkunaitė (Micheline); Nicholas Elliott (Paul); Derek Kueter (Reporter); Sophie Langevin (Elke); Tania Marzen (Eva); Myriam Muller (Maria); Orian Williams (Hans).

Directed by E. Elias Merhige. Written by Steven Katz. Executive producer: Paul Brooks. Produced by Nicolas Cage, Jeff Levine. Co-producers: Richard Johns, Jimmy de Brabant. Line producer: Jean-Claude Schlim. Associate producer: Orian Williams. Original music by Dan Jones. Cinematography by Lou Bogue. Film editing by Chris Wyatt. Casting: Carl Proctor. Production design by Asheton Gorton. Art direction: Chris Bradley. Costume design by Caroline de Vivaise. Makeup department: Ann Buchanan (hair designer, makeup designer); Pauline Fowler (makeup designer); Willem Dafoe; special effects makeup design; Jamie Iovino (head prosthetic molds); Willem Dafoe; Julian Murray (head sculptor/prosthetic designer); Willem Dafoe; special effects makeup design; Katja Reinert (makeup artist); Amber Sibley (key prosthetics makeup artist); Willem Dafoe; special makeup effects artist; David Stoneman (head foam prosthetics); Willem Dafoe. Production Management: Jean-Claude Schlim (production manager, Assistant Director); Edward Brett (first assistant director); Jamie Christopher (second assistant director). Props: Dan Urbin. Supervising sound editor: Nigel Heath. Sound: Carlo Thoss. Post-production supervisor: Stephen Barker. Second focus puller: Richard Bevan. Key grip: Bernard Bregier. Camera operator: Mike Fox. Production coordinator: Lydia Gonzalez. R (U.S.)

FILM RATINGS

- Must see
- Excellent
- Good
- Mediocre
- Fodder for MST-3K

WHAT WOMEN WANT

Director: Nancy Meyers. Paramount, 2000. With: Mel Gibson, Helen Hunt, Marisa Tomei & Alan Alda.

Despite a great premise—a man suddenly has the power to hear women's thoughts—the film delivers only moderate results. While this could have been a showcase for a feminist tract, director Nancy Meyers takes a centrist path that points out the foibles of both genders. Mel Gibson is at his most charming as Nick Marshall, a sexist ad agency exec who loses a promotion to a woman, played by Helen Hunt. That night, Nick is almost electrocuted, and wakes up the next morning with a new-found skill. He desperately tries to get rid of it, but soon realizes the power it gives him, and sets out for revenge. Oscar winner Marisa Tomei is wasted in the supporting role. The film is a funny piece of fluff from a director who has a flair for romantic comedy.

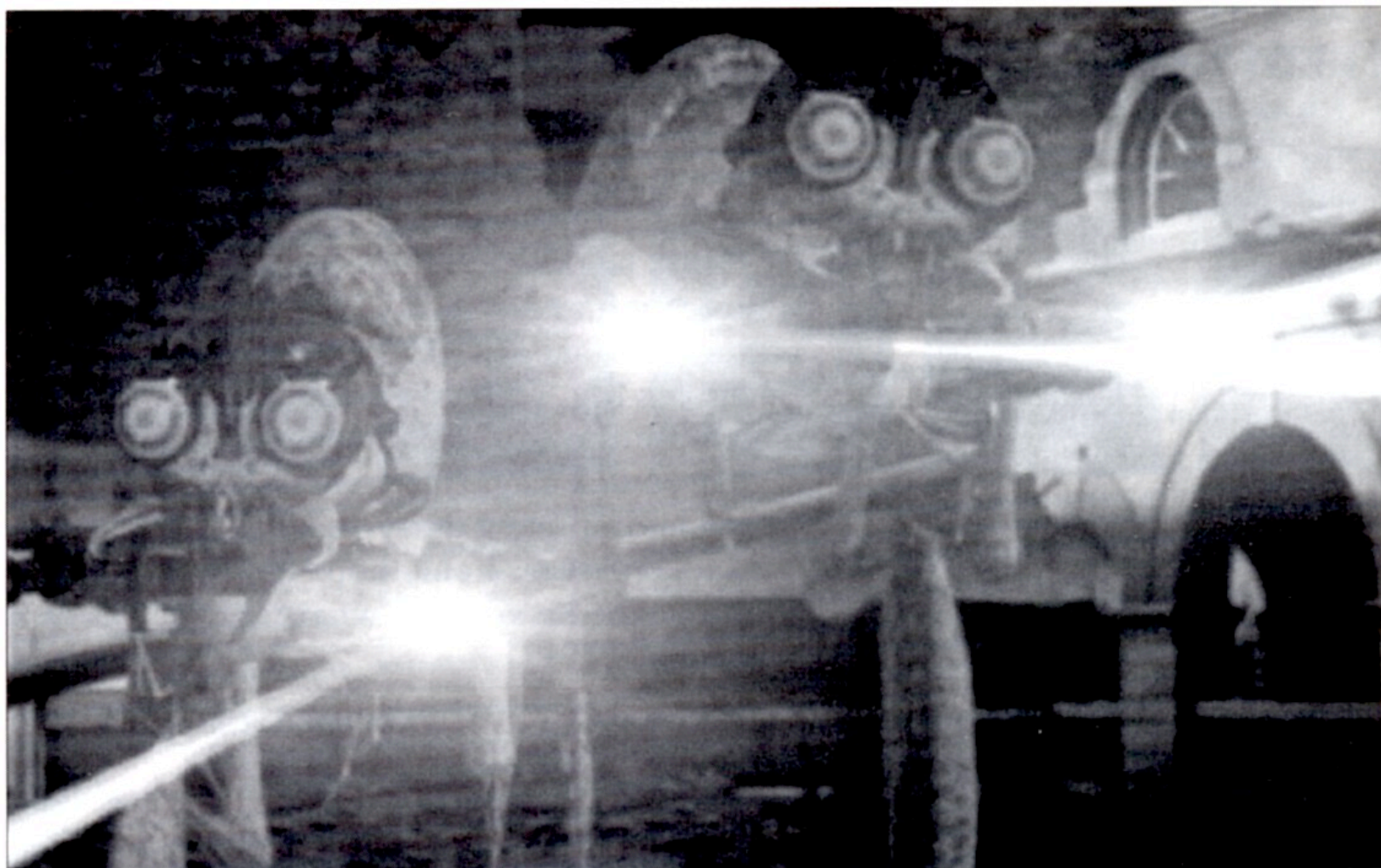
●● Dan Scapperotti

STRANGE FREQUENCY

VHS, 2001. Directed by Mary Lambert & Bryan Spicer. With: Erik Palladino, Danny Masterson, Eric Roberts, Chris Masterson, John Taylor, Judd Nelson.

I was sort of hoping that the concept of narrowcasting would broaden the options on TV. Instead, it too often acts as an excuse to filter formulas through a demographically targeted set of conventions. Thus, depending on the network, you might see *A Christmas Carol...* with baseball! Or *Mutiny on the Bounty...* with barbeque! Or in this case *THE TWILIGHT ZONE...* with rock!

This feature-length anthology is a decidedly mixed bag. The best that can be said about the opening episode in which a pair of metalheads (Erik Palladino and Danny Masterson) die and go to disco Hell is that director Lambert at least avoids turning her disco demons into the two-dimensional caricatures you usually find in such exercises. A story in which a room-trashing rock star (John Taylor) goes head-to-head with a stunningly efficient hotel



The future is grim in **BUG WARS**, a post-apocalyptic fantasy which starts out a moving examination of humankind's struggle for survival, but devolves quickly into videogame violence.

housekeeper (Holland Taylor) has potential until it goes full-bore supernatural and fails to live up to its opening promise. Meanwhile, the final story, in which an A&R man's (Judd Nelson) ability to spot talent is both a blessing and a curse offers an ending that may or may not be the most exploitative thing ever broadcast on basic cable. It's certainly amongst the sickest.

Pick of the crop goes to the second episode, "My Generation," in which a pair of itinerant serial killers face a generational divide over their choice of background music. Directed by Spicer, the segment has clever performances by Eric Roberts as the Deadhead and Chris Masterson as the thrasher, and a script with enough wit and surprises to appeal beyond its targeted market. If only the rest of the show was as adventurous.

●● Dan Persons

THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF JULES VERNE

The Sci-Fi Channel, 2001. With: Michael Praed, Francesca Hunt, Michel Courtemanche and Chris Demetral.

The Sci-Fi Channel's new hour show, set in the nineteenth century, owes more to the *WILD WILD WEST* than Jules Verne and requires more than a little leap of faith to incorporate all the historical characters and

weird devices that pop up in each episode. Phileas Fogg (Michael Praed), is set on traveling around the world when he teams up with his cousin Rebecca (Francesca Hunt), a Secret Service agent, and Jules Verne (Chris Demetral), a young writer. Fogg is soon embroiled in one plot after another. Along the way they run into vampires in Carpathia, a French time machine, and a gadget designed to bring the dead back to life. Unfortunately, the characters are bland, and Fogg's servant-navigator Passepartout is downright annoying. The atmosphere is not helped by being shot on video, which gives the show an afternoon soap opera look.

● Dan Scapperotti

BUG WARS

Prescription Films, 2000. Directed and written by Timothy Hines; produced by Lora Oliver; production design: Lora Oliver, Timothy Hines. With: Renee Sellers, Corree Dibble.

BUG WARS begins well. It is 120 years after Earth's final nuclear conflagration. Two women, sad-eyed Nicole Ryan (Darleen Renee Sellers,) and statuesque Sandra Fever (Corree Dibble) emerge from a cryogenic slumber to find themselves the only surviving humans on the planet. The waifs roam a vast, Geoff Darrow-type cluster of deserted buildings in search of food and

shelter. Their only comfort comes from their companionship, which reaches a close, but not quite intimate, level. This morbid yet humanly touching vision of a future devastated by a nuclear war is as good as *BUG WARS* gets. All too soon the film degenerates into nothing more than a rather poorly imagined video game, with the two women zapping giant, CGI-generated, spider-like invaders with their laser guns. After about 50 minutes of this, director/writer Timothy Hines, apparently stuck for a closing fade-out, repeats flash cuts of just about every scene in the film up to that point.

As disappointing as *BUG WARS* is, it is a film to see, mainly because of the ingenuity of Hines and his producer and co-production designer, Lora Oliver. Using what appears to be a poverty-row budget, Hines and Oliver have managed to create a unique post-apocalyptic world. Their images of devastation are eerily claustrophobic. Also worth seeing is the performance of Sellers, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Susan Sarandon. Watching pre-blast videos that she has salvaged from the wreckage, her grief is palpable.

●● Mitch Persons

LETTERS

TRIBUTE TO FRED CLARKE

I was shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Fred Clarke a full month and a half after it occurred. Last year, I argued with him over some interviews I had submitted that he had neglected to publish. At the time, the loss of money seemed more important than it really was.

Now that he's gone, I wish I had thanked him for the opportunities I had been given as his correspondent. His clout in the industry enabled me to get assignments to interview people like David Cronenberg, Jennifer Tilly, Timothy Dalton and many others. Though I did the work and made the connections on my own, I would never have done these things without his faith in my ability. His confidence in me gave me confidence in myself, and

honed my skills at working under deadline, a valuable lesson for any freelancer.

Having pondered the act of suicide myself, I now know that had I actually gone through with the deed, I would have missed out on a lot of great moments in my life. Had I known about Mr. Clarke's desire to end his life, I would gladly have attempted to talk him out of it. He started this magazine from nothing, and built it into a thirty-year venture that continues. I only hope he finds the peace he sought, wherever he may be.

—Paul Wardle
Toronto, Ontario

THE X-FILES

When I saw your October X-FILES issue in my local book store, I didn't have to look through it to know I want-

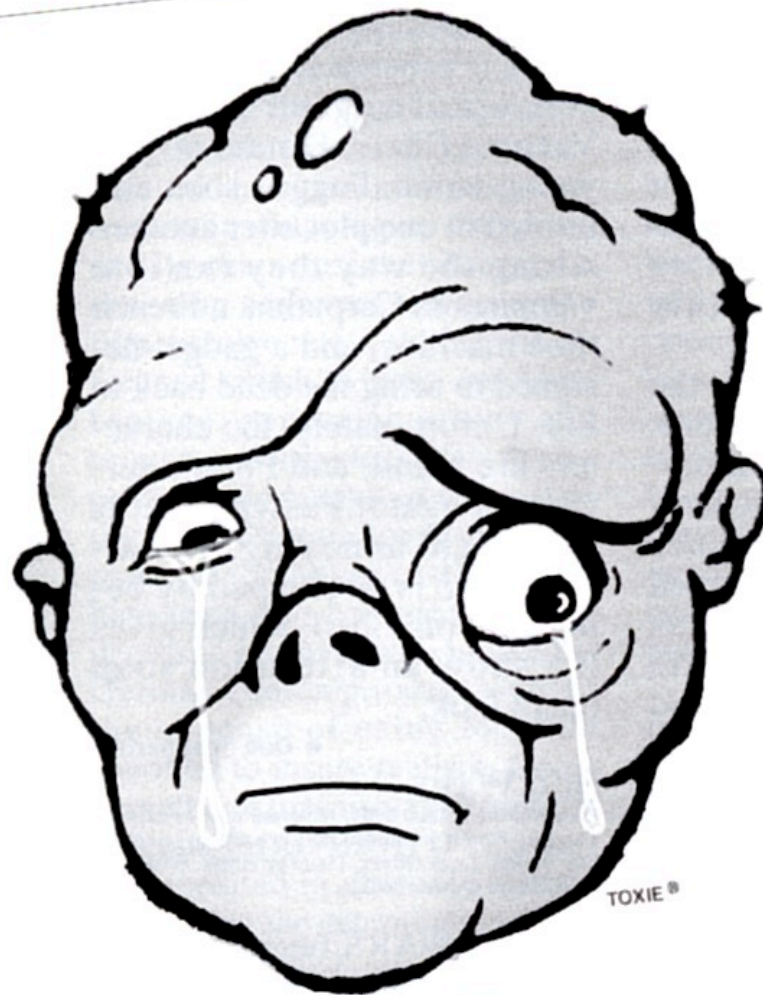
ed to buy it. I have been very open-minded about the show. I can accept an episode that isn't quite up to par with the rest of the series, and hope for a better one next week. I certainly don't think the whole season can be tainted by a few below-average episodes. Your reviewer disagrees with me.

The articles were well-written and insightful, but my specific complaint concerns Paula Vitaris' *Episode Guide*. At best, parts of it could actually be described as a guide. To be fair, it did guide, but at the same time I knew by the attitude how Ms. Vitaris feels about the show. Instead of giving us a general outline of each episode, her description is negative and biased, almost derogatory. As she breaks it down, she is putting it down. Yes, some ideas and plot lines are less than good or just okay, but I would not be as judgmental and quick to insult. If a reader were to look at this guide, they would think the whole season was a waste and not even watch the eighth season. It is reasonable to write that this season had its share of good and bad episodes, but all-in-all the the year was entertaining and moved the overall story along. This season was not my favorite (the sixth was), but I did respect it for what it was: A great show that overcomes various problems every week with wonderful talent and characters. Next year, you should get a person who at least respects, if not likes, the show to review it. The people who read these kinds of articles love the show and want to know more about it. I can understand criticism of the show, but this was not accurate or responsible. I enjoy your magazine, but next time I will look through it before I purchase it.

—Melissa S. Kennedy
Lansing, IL

[Opinions on a season's quality will naturally vary. Paula has always been honest in her opinions of what's good and bad about THE X-FILES, and we can ask no greater contribution from one of our writers.—Ed.]

AND FROM THE HEART OF HELL'S KITCHEN...



To the Friends and Family of Fred Clarke:

On behalf of myself, my partner Michael Herz, and the Troma Team, Fred Clarke will always be remembered as a champion of independent art.

Indeed, Fred was a brilliant writer, and never gave up the fight for truly independent cinema.

The citizens of the Troma Team will dearly miss Fred, and will regret his passing.

Toxie and Sgt. Kabukiman NYPD send Fred their love.

Lloyd Kaufman
Troma Entertainment

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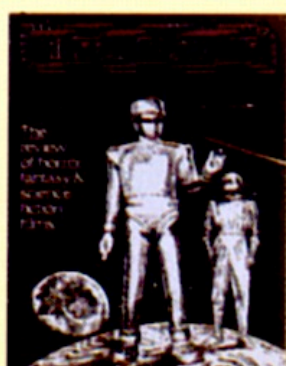
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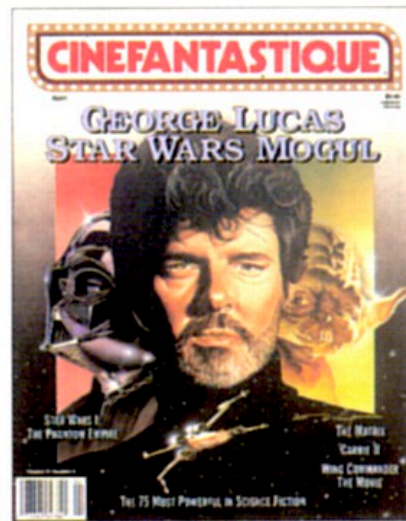
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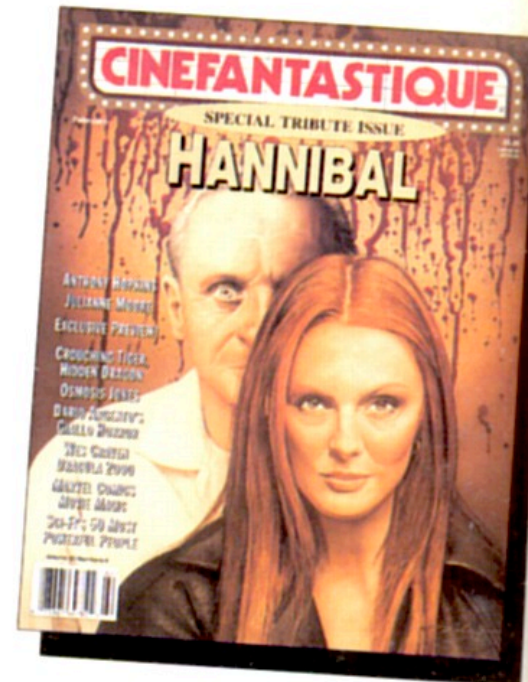
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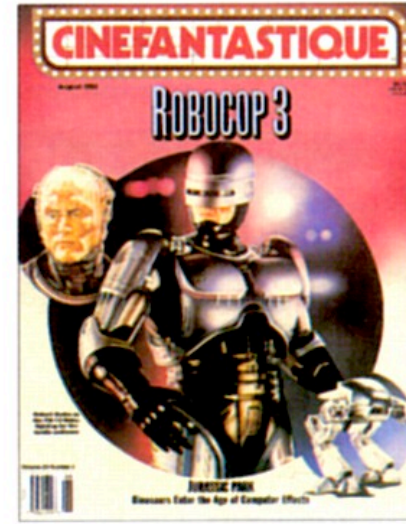
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